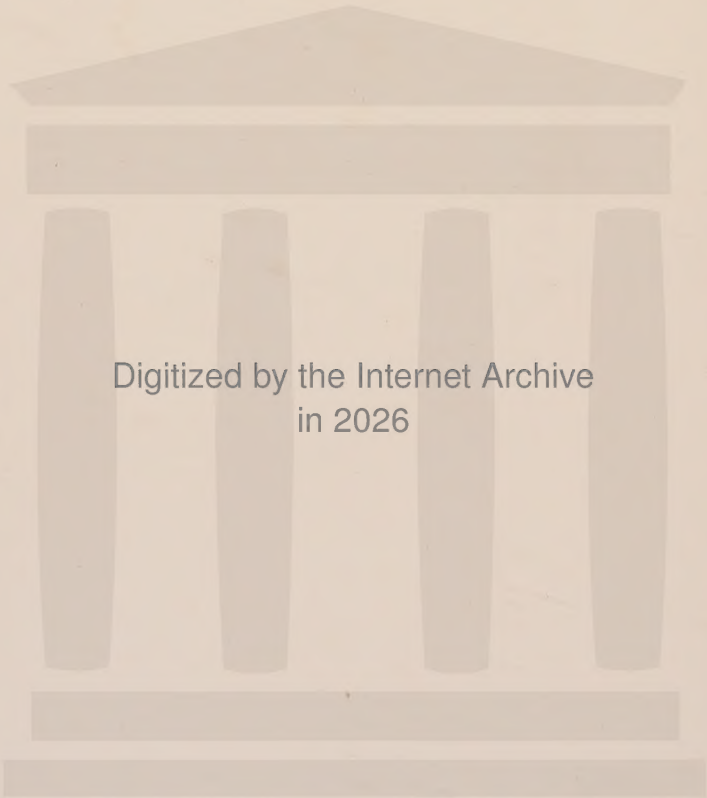
V. Donald Emmel

from Mrs. Henry Marcotte

Henry Marcotte

with best wishes of

Helen Bradshaw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Frontispiece BEIRUT FROM BRUMANA—SHOWING LITTORAL PLAIN

The Jordan Valley and Petra

By

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and

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Syria Mission, Beirut, Syria

With 159 Illustrations

Two Volumes

I

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THESE VOLUMES ARE DEDICATED
TO THE LOVED ONES IN OUR HOMES
WHO FOLLOWED US TENDERLY IN THEIR THOUGHTS
DURING OUR WANDERINGS

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INTRODUCTORY

TWENTY years ago, when the two writers were in Princeton, the one as Professor, and the other as a student (Class of 1883), they formed a compact to visit Petra, and the region east and south of the Dead Sea. During these twenty years Dr. Hoskins has been in Syria upon his life-work, and has become acquainted with the land, the people, the Arabic language, and, not least among other advantages, the government officials, whose aid and favor made this trip possible, under the most auspicious circumstances. This journey, often thought of, often mentioned, is now a reality. It involved over six hundred miles on horseback, and of the forty-one days between Beirut and Jerusalem, thirty-four days were east of the Jordan. Even though planned for the rainy months (February 4th to March 15th), it was an ideal trip, because of almost uniform good weather. We experienced one storm in the land of Edom, and rode our last day to Jerusalem in the face of a driving storm, but at least thirty-seven days were as fine as we could have desired for any purpose.

It was ideal in many other ways. During the forty-one days not a man nor an animal fell ill, nor

suffered in any way from accident; we had no delays, lost no baggage by theft or carelessness, never missed our road, and never pitched tents in the darkness. We lived well in camp without even touching a chicken; we ate game from Banias to Jerusalem; we never saw a cold boiled egg on the journey, and with one or two exceptions we enjoyed hot food at every noonday meal in the wilderness. How this was accomplished in the wilderness will appear from the story.

Professor Libbey's purpose was to study the valley of the Jordan from beginning to end, and hence we left the sea at Sidon and climbed over Lebanon via Jezzin and Kefrhuneh, from which high altitude, 4100 feet, we had a magnificent view of the general configuration of Southern Lebanon, the Upper Jordan, and Galilee before descending into the valleys of the Litany and the Jordan, to examine the details. Between the gorge of the Litany at Burghuz and the Hasbany at Khiyam, we studied and crossed the low divide which forms the watershed between the valley of the Litany and the valley of the Jordan, and went at once to Banias. It was our original purpose to cross and recross the Jordan as many times as possible, between its cradle and its grave, and then push eastward into Moab, and Southward into Edom. What we actually did, was to circle the Waters of Merom from the east, cross the Jordan at Jisr Benat Yakub, pass down to Galilee, by boat from Tabigha to the entrance of the Upper Jordan,

xiii View of Beirut

around the Sea of Galilee, on the west, across the Jordan again to Gadara, then down the Eastern Range through Ajlun, Gilead, Moab, and Edom to Petra and Mount Hor; then upon our return journey we made a descent into the Arabah, and went around the southern end of the Dead Sea, up to Hebron and Jerusalem, and back to the Jordan at Jericho.

From Beirut with its port, phonographs, and one automobile, back through Crusading, Mohammedan, New Testament, Maccabean, and Jewish times, to the desert and days of the Exodus, by way of the Lebanon, Jordan, Galilee, Gilead, Moab, Edom, the Arabah, and the Dead Sea, is a journey into regions of country and of history that are far from the beaten line of the ordinary traveller.

The writers of this book cherish the hope, that while serving as a permanent record of a pleasant and successful journey, it may also be a useful guide to regions not often visited, a contribution to geology, and a valuable addition, by means of a unique series of photographs, to our knowledge of the country into which the Children of Israel came, after their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

THE JORDAN VALLEY AND PETRA

CHAPTER I

PREPARATORY WORK

SEVEN months before we journeyed, we began active preparations for the trip. Our first care was to make a move in the direction of securing a permit from the Waly at Damascus. Treaty stipulations rule out the rights of all foreigners to enter the Hedjas and vicinity of Mecca. For many years the government has not only refused to allow travellers to go down the pilgrimage road east of the Jordan, claiming it to be unsafe, but has often seized and sent back under armed escort persons who have been perfectly willing to face all risks on their own responsibility. Dr. George E. Post and Prof. Harvey Porter, of the Syrian Protestant College, had this experience in the year 1885. Three travellers, in 1898,[1] had an

[1] *Forbidden Paths in the Land of Og.*

exciting time in avoiding government centres and escaping the notice of those who gave word of their movements and of the horsemen sent in pursuit of them. On one particular day they changed plans four times, changed guides twice, and ended by sleeping in a lonely valley.

Friendship with some local official often avails for regions within his influence, but ends at a new boundary. There is hardly a traveller east of the Jordan, during the last twenty-five years, who has not had some annoying experience in this line. A few have slipped through, entering government centres after dark, leaving them before sunrise, and spending the whole of their days in fear of being intercepted and sent back to the nearest government centre.

During the course of four months we did our best to learn the names and connections of all the chief officials along our proposed route, and find out, where possible, who represented these men at headquarters. Then, by personal introductions, we secured as many letters as possible to these local officials, to be used in case of need—that is, wherever we might happen to fall into trouble of any kind. Some friends advised strongly against making any application to the Governor-General of Damascus, because a flat refusal from him would have made the journey an awkward one, if not well-nigh impossible. Local officials often yield to timely gifts, but whenever they wish to hinder they fall back on the device of referring the whole

3 BET MIRI. TEMPLE ON PHŒNICIAN FOUNDATIONS, NEAR BRUMANA

matter to headquarters. The Governor-General might also have made a polite response, and have referred the request to Constantinople, urging us to follow it through our consul and minister. This, of course, would mean an indefinite postponement. Having had much official business with the Governor-General during a period of six or seven years, and enjoying something of a personal acquaintance, Dr. Hoskins at last decided to make the attempt for a permit, that would remove all difficulties. He opened communications with a good friend, Nasif Beg Meshaka, of Damascus, and after explaining the whole situation, urged him to use his best efforts to secure a letter for us, or, failing in this, to avoid by every possible means receiving a refusal. The days which elapsed while he was making the last approach to the Waly were anxious ones for us, and when, in December, his letter came, telling us that he had actually received an order from Nazim Pasha, to the Mutaserrif of Kerak, to take us down to Petra and to bring us back again, great was our rejoicing. This made everything easy. The results of this order fully justified our expectations from the beginning to the end of our trip. We were treated with politeness and attention from every Turkish official that we came in contact with. We made no night journeys, we avoided no government centres, and we had government guards wherever we needed or called for them. We believe we are the first American party ever going into that region under

government sanction and care. We flew the American and Turkish flags on our mule loads all day long and over our tents at night. We slept under the American flag and ate under the Turkish, and with God's good care at all times we made a long and difficult journey into a dangerous and barren country with safety, with pleasure, and with success.

The facsimile of that order is found on page 39, and translated into the English language it runs as follows:

"WILAYET OF SYRIA
CORRESPONDENCE OFFICE.
NO. 237
TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE MUTASERRIF OF KERAK:

"SIR:

"In that the two persons whose names are Pastor Hoskins and his Teacher Libbey, travellers of American nationality, wish to journey from Jerusalem to the region of the valley of Moses, and the American Consular Agent in Damascus having asked the same, let them be treated with all respect and see that they be accompanied, for protection during their going and coming back, with a sufficient number of horsemen. Leaving what is necessary for the carrying out of this order to you to whom the order now belongs;

"WALY OF SYRIA.

"319 19th of Ramadan and
16th of December 317."

The next step in our preparation was to decide whether we would make the journey on camels, or with horses and mules. For those who visit Petra, coming from Egypt or Sinai, there is no choice, they must make use of camels. We had a choice of three routes. We could visit Jerusalem first and journey from Hebron by camels, as Drs. Robinson and Smith did in 1838; or we could go by way of Jericho, Madeba, and Kerak, the most common and safest route to-day. But being under the protection of the Governor of Damascus, we chose the most interesting and longest route of all—that is, east of the Jordan all the way down. There would have been no object in mounting camels before we reached Madeba or Kerak, and by careful inquiry we found that there were no insuperable difficulties in taking horses and mules the whole way. Therefore we decided upon taking horses and mules.

This settled also the style of our outfit, or rather left us completely free in every way, seeing that there was no question of any change of animals, from the beginning to the end of our trip.

We then secured the services of Milhem Dulaikany, a Druze from Aleih, Mount Lebanon, who had considerable experience in the care and management of camp outfits, and with him began to arrange the details. His best recommendation was the fact that he had made a journey into that region a year before. He was also a Druze, and for this reason was better fitted to deal with the people we were to meet with in this region. We

decided upon Druze muleteers for the same reason, and while they were not the easiest men in the world to deal with, they were certainly a capable and sturdy lot of men, who never failed us at any point in the journey.

We drew up a contract in the Consulate with Milhem for a complete outfit, comprising three tents, a kitchen, a dining, and a living tent, with all necessary furniture, bedding, carpets, dishes, and cooking outfit. These were all brought to Dr. Hoskins's home in Beirut and set up for inspection. We then made suggestions as to details, added shawls and rugs of our own, and gave special directions as to packing our personal belongings, guns, ammunition, and photographic supplies.

Our arrangements with Milhem included our daily fare, and at this point we turned him over to Mrs. Hoskins, who gave him more minute directions, as to what kinds of food we needed, and the way in which it was to be served. He was told many things he was to do, and many things he was not to do. "No cold boiled eggs for luncheon, no chickens except in cases of dire extremity, no indigestible pastries for show and remorse, a minimum of sardines, and other unsavory stuff sold in tins, but plenty of good, plain substantial food." Certainly Milhem did profit by these timely suggestions, and carried them out faithfully, to our great comfort and safety. In addition to the apparently interminable supply of candles and salt and sugar and rice, he carried flour and potatoes in plenty.

THE LEBANON RANGE FROM BRUMANA

We added soda-water, Boston brown bread, and some bottles of good Lebanon wine. Mrs. Hoskins stipulated for two things which added greatly to our comfort; one was an alcohol lamp, which fitted nicely into a tin cover about as large as a tomato can. With the aid of this, we ate warm luncheons every day in the wilderness. What this meant in February and March, and especially on damp and rainy days, can be best understood by those who have lived on the "cold, hard-boiled egg diet." Kasim, our table boy, easily carried this outfit in his saddle-bags, and it never took long to heat meat and potatoes and coffee, or whatever we had for luncheon. The other special fitting was an oven made of wrought iron, about two feet long, eighteen inches wide, and two feet high. It had a fire-box below, and a grate for coals on top, and when used for baking the men would encircle and almost cover it with fire. With this we were able to bake bread all along the route, and now and then have a dish that could be cooked in no other way. At Banias—Cæsarea Philippi—we took out our guns, and from that day until our entrance into Jerusalem we never lacked game for our table.

Just here we may as well introduce our cook. He answered to the name of Butrus in Arabic, and Peter in English. He was the only Christian among the men, and now and then had a rather hard time of it. He was faithful and efficient beyond all praise. He rode a mule that kicked and stumbled, and how he kept his seat above all the

bedding, saddle-bags, canteens, water-bottles, and baskets of meat and bread was something of a mystery. He wore a spotless white turban, as badge of his office, and a most remarkable low-seated pair of pantaloons. He was the hardest working man in camp. He was always moving before the dawn, sorting and cleaning, and then cooking breakfast and something for luncheon. His tent always went down last, and his dish-pans and fire-box were the last items to be put upon the swaying loads. Then he rode all day with the muleteers, who teased and nagged him. He was constantly on the lookout for eggs and milk and cheese, or anything that would add to our comfort and pleasure. He was often seen to slip off his animal, an hour away from camp, fish an iron vessel out of his baskets, climb a hillside, to where a shepherd guarded his sheep and goats, bargain with him for milk, and then chase the unruly milkers, until he had enough for our supper and our breakfast. More frequently, however, when we camped near the towns, he would push ahead and purchase charcoal, and have the fires lighted almost before he touched the ground. This meant for us twenty minutes later, or on our arrival, a cup of hot tea served the moment we were ready for it. Then after sunset, for the days were short, he would produce, as though by magic, a dinner of two or three courses that abundantly satisfied our wilderness appetites. We shall long remember Butrus, and his faithful services to us by night and by day.

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Our Party at Petra

His picture may be seen on page 21, standing by the kitchen tent, holding some partridges in one hand, and a small kid in the other; at his feet is his "cooking stove," simply an iron, bench-like box for charcoal, and nearby the oven, which served us so well in that hungry land.

Kasim, or Abu Salim, our table "boy," was a tall, strong Druze, the bravest of all our caravan. He had charge of the dining tent, dealt out provisions to Butrus, set the table, waited upon us, and saw that everything was in due time restored to the canteen. He rode with us all day long, and carried the luncheon. He took charge of the photographic outfit, dismounting, and helping each time a photograph was taken. He carried the camera and plate-box, where he could easily detach it, and tucked the tripod into a safe place under his leg. He was a faithful, willing, and intelligent helper, and never lost or broke anything given into his care. His picture can be seen on page 13, the second face on the back row, counting from the left.

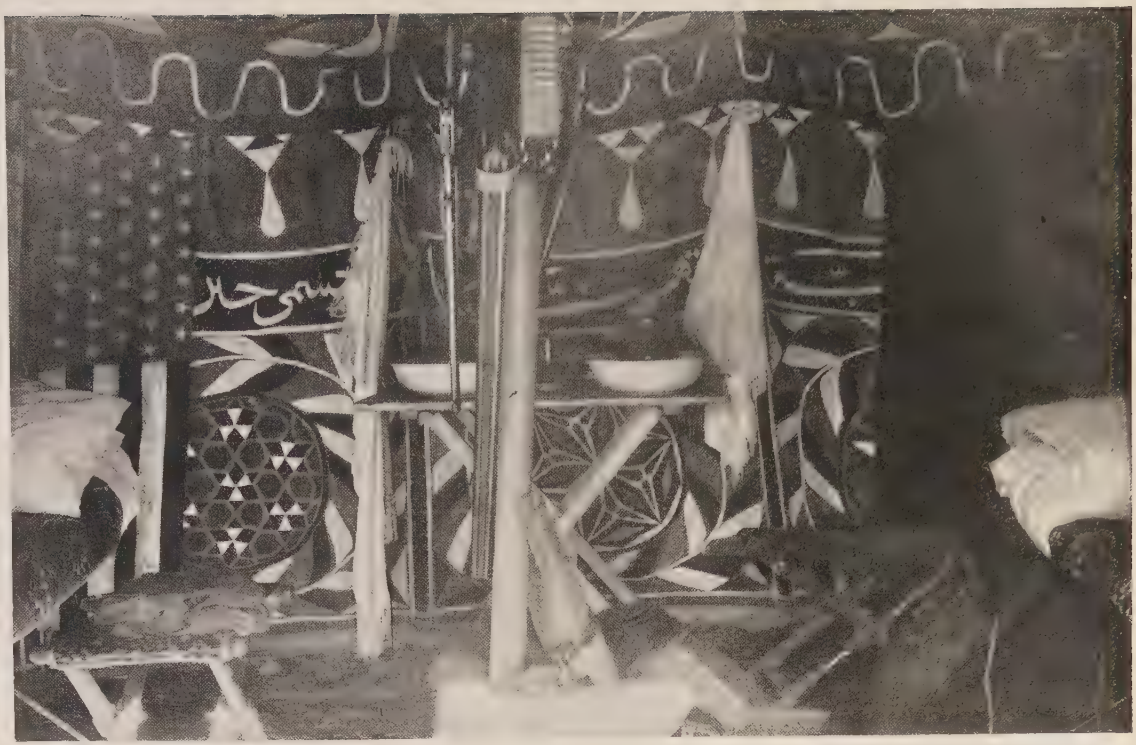
The "canteen" was a constant source of surprise. When Milhem opened the big chest, and produced a shining silver-plated waiter, platters, teapots, and candlesticks of the same metal, a set of gold-edged china dishes, and an endless array of forks and knives and spoons, the Professor was pleased and satisfied. But we soon grew accustomed to eating respectably even in the wilderness, and found enough to test our strength and patience

in other ways. The tents had fourteen ropes with flies, and were gorgeously adorned inside after the present manner of Egyptian tent-making art. They were strong and in good condition, stood the rough journey well, and turned the rain perfectly in the two stormy periods encountered.

The furniture included iron camp bedsteads, a large table, camp chairs, and rugs. Our own living tent gave us all necessary privacy and quiet; while the dining tent was also ours when needed, and sheltered Milhem and Kasim at night. The kitchen tent contained the provisions, the coal, the barley for the horses, and gave some shelter to the muleteers on the cold nights of the journey.

One never ceases to be surprised at the hundred little contrivances and conveniences which came tumbling out of our rough looking bundles, from the lanterns to the flag poles, and at the speed with which our skilful muleteers took down or set up this moving habitation in the wilderness. The first few days on such a trip are generally days of disagreement and adjustment among the muleteers, but after that all moves along smoothly—provided you have a man who knows his business and treats the men fairly.

Milhem was bound by contract to furnish us two good riding horses, and enough animals to carry the whole outfit with speed and safety. When the camp was set up for inspection, the horses were brought also and were offered to us for a spin. One of them instantly showed his



17 INTERIOR OF TENT

metal and make-up by clearing a space for himself, using his heels for this purpose. He kept up this exercise to the very end of the trip, but without permanent injury to either man or beast. His other good qualities more than atoned for this peccadillo, and when we knew his mind on the subject of all other horses, we treated him with proper respect and due caution. We named him "February" and his mate "March." Their photographs can be seen on page 37.

Three other horses carried Milhem and Kasim and the star of our outfit, a Kurd named Mustapha. He had sole charge of our five saddle-horses, and a more capable and faithful fellow in his work could not be found. He fed, groomed, saddled, and watered those five horses by day, he watched them by night, with the almost incredible result that we never had a sick horse, never had a sore back, never lost a shoe, and never were delayed an hour while on the trip. What this means, only old travellers can fully understand. Mustapha was, moreover, the most cheerful of the men. He had lived all his life with horses, and had journeyed in many lands and under many circumstances, in peace and war. He could tell the jolliest stories of his life in Egypt, in Italy, in Austria; he knew something of Cairo, Vienna, Berlin, and even Chicago, where he went with a horse-show at the time of the World's Fair. He had a real love for animals, and their affection for him and their obedience was interesting to see. By explicit

arrangement, his five animals were always tethered in a row, immediately in front of our tents, for greater safety. On his own riding animal he carried huge bags of tibn, five feed bags, a small sledge hammer for driving pins, a long heavy rope with two iron pins, and a hobble for each horse. He had his own extra suit of clothing, and when we were camped for Sunday, he came out a sort of "dude" in his good clothes. He had been on this track before, while taking smuggled horses to the Egyptian army, and seemed to find acquaintances wherever he went. He could find barley and bread where other muleteers would be in danger of starving. He rarely lost his temper, but when he did he showed a command of strong language that was peculiarly terrific.

Having introduced Milhem, Kasim, Butrus, and Mustapha, we must introduce the other four worthies—the muleteers. Seated in the picture, page 13, they are, beginning from the left, Abu Khalil, Rasheed, Salmon, and Hamad. They were brawny fellows, who gave us good service along with their mules and donkeys. It is an ancient custom in this land, which tells its own sad tale, that one hires a mule, at say sixty-five cents per day, or a mule and a donkey at one dollar per day, and the owner is thrown in for nothing—he simply goes along to care for his mule and donkey, to feed them, to load them, and to drive them. These muleteers lead a hard life, and are consequently rough men. If we were asked what was

21 KITCHEN TENT

the only thing we did not enjoy in all our long journey, we must say in all truthfulness that it was being obliged to listen for so many days to their never-ending cursing and swearing. We did all in our power to check this profanity, but when the way seemed long, or extra rough, or a mule fell, or a load slipped, or when there was any occasion for increasing the loads with extra barley and extra charcoal, they indulged in an amount of swearing that made us shudder. Most travellers, ignorant of the language, hear only the noise and excited dialogue, but they can have no conception of the contents, unless they have lived winter and summer next door to a lot of longshoremen or southern mule-drivers. It is said that General Wheeler is the author of a story which illustrates this feature of travelling. He labored in the army with all classes of soldiers and camp followers, and met with some measure of success among them all. Only one class of men withstood the melting influence of his logic, his love, and his religion—these were the mule-drivers. After many months, perhaps years, there was a response, and the General was called upon by a large delegation of those turbulent and loud-voiced mule-drivers, who expressed a desire and purpose to reform, to give up their rough ways, their drinking, and their awful swearing. The General was greatly surprised and pleased, and forthwith gave them an excellent address, brimming over with good advice and encouragement. The men listened and appeared deeply affected, so

much so, that they forgot the latter part of their errand, and were bowed graciously out of his presence. A few minutes later, two of the spokesmen returned with apologies, and said they had forgotten a very important question. It was this: "General, we have reformed, but who are you going to get to drive those mules?" It is even so in Syria. If it were possible to convert or reform this class of men at once, the ugly problem would still remain as to who was "to drive those mules." It is of course beyond our province to write a dissertation on mules, but we may say in passing that the Syrian mule is about the wiriest, the toughest skinned, the most headstrong, and the most dangerous of all domesticated animals. On the other hand, he is one of the most indispensable, because he can do and travel and stand more in all weathers and under all circumstances than any other four-footed creature.

We had one mule who manifested a deep antipathy daily to being fitted with his load. Perhaps there was not a day on the trip when this mule did not kick off his load before it was half on or properly secured. Six men would lead him and push him up to his burden, some would seize and lift the half load, but before they could get the other half up, he would shy and pull and kick and scatter everything and everybody. We chained his jaw to his front legs, we tied his front legs together, we put his head into a bag, we made use of a twitch on his lip, but every day we had the

usual circus. Some days he threw his load half a dozen times, and almost as many times tangled himself in his own ropes, and scattered the other mules and their loads in as many directions as there were mules. They beat him, they kicked him, he kicked in return, and trod on nearly every human foot in the camp; they wept tears of anger over him, they swore at *his* religion and the religion of his *owner's* ancestors. In fact he exhausted the patience of the camp, as also every expedient we could devise to entrap him. But each day they finally loaded him, and when once on the march he was a model mule.

So when we say of our muleteers, that they were the hardest lot of men we ever travelled with, we are simply saying that they were masters of their profession. On the march they either preceded or followed us by a mile or so. Now and then we left a guard with the baggage train, but as we got farther south, we kept it more and more in sight for obvious reasons. In camp we were all one family. According to custom they cared for their own animals at all times. They bought their own eggs and bread and raisins and figs; our part was to give them one dish of cooked food at night, usually rice, and to cook for them anything they chose to buy. We carried along a bag of tobacco which was dealt out in the wilderness; and always when we encamped for two successive nights in the same place, we bought a lamb or kid and allowed them a good filling up on strong cooked food. We

lightened their burdens, we cheered their existence all we could, and in spite of their cursing and cussedness, our hearts warmed toward them, and when at the end they humbly begged pardon and forgiveness for all their wickedness, we felt like enlarging the bakhshish, even though we had registered many a vow that they did not deserve a farthing.

The picture of our eight men and two soldiers, as well as the string of thirteen animals, can be seen on page 29.

"Among the cheerful sights and sounds of camp life are the donkeys." We had three lively specimens along of the genuine Syrian donkeys, which are certainly worthy of a high place in the genus when classified according to the bray. They had sonorous voices, each of which we came to recognize as easily as we recognized the voices of the muleteers. One of them seemed more musical than the others, and it was his privilege to lead the band. The moment he lifted up his voice, his first mate would turn his eye toward him as much as to say, "Do you wish to hear a real bray?" and go through the necessary preliminary quivers before joining the song. Along about the middle of the duet, the second mate would have his preparations complete, and after clearing his throat properly, would join in with a blast that clearly established his place as the leading trombone of the trio. The solo was amusing and bearable, the duet was excruciating, from its lack of harmony, but the trio was

hideous. They drawl out their asinine melody, or speech, or complaint, or whatever it may be, and they grunt and pump and strain, with head and neck extended, with rigid tail working like a pump handle, until their strength fails, and "the bray, apparently unfinished, settles back with a sort of gasp or gulp into their throats." But this fatal ending is only apparent for just as soon as they catch breath they begin again. They never seem to tire of repeating their parts without the slightest variation. For the first week in camp one is amused and finds himself expecting some little change in the melody, and this disappointed expectation gradually develops into a disgust that would cause an archbishop to make use of expletives. Then one is beguiled into attempts to shut the leader off before his solo has become a duet. Whenever he begins his preliminary grunts, everybody yells, hurls stones, rushes at him with upraised clubs, but in nine cases out of ten he has his way, and performs his piece from beginning to end to the chagrin of all his opponents. They have just so much to say and they go through with it in spite of opposition or fate. "But after all it may be that the poor donkey means well. It may be that they enjoy their little harmony."

"I hope they do. If so, it is about the only pleasure they have in life. Their lot is a hard one. There is no other animal in the East for which I have such a sincere pity as I have for those poor, starved, beaten, century-abused, but uncomplaining

donkeys. No other animal is so passive and uncomplaining as this. Not even the best men, although aided it may be by divine grace, bear so patiently as they all sorts of violence and abuse. They take things as they come. They are resigned to the inevitable. They make no show or pretence in the world, while they do a vast amount of the world's drudgery, for which they receive no reward. Who was ever known to pet or praise a donkey? Very seldom is there found a man who seems even to appreciate their services. If it is true that men came up from the lowest orders of creation, then it is certainly true that at that stage which the life of the donkey represents, the race of human beings left behind many noble qualities."[1]

No one can travel in Syria and Palestine, during the twentieth century, without coming under obligation to Dr. George Adam Smith, whose *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* is one of the most helpful and fascinating books ever written about any land, and we cordially make mention of the pleasure we derived from reading and rereading the various chapters, as we journeyed through the regions he describes. It takes the place of many other books. Some of his delineations and diagrams have suggested others.

He is a bold writer, however, who presumes to furnish anything new and startling concerning the geography of the region west of the Jordan. We cherish the hope that we have some contributions

[1] *East of the Jordan*, Merrill.

29 THE CARAVAN

to make to a fuller knowledge of the Jordan Valley and the Eastern Range.

Between the sea and the desert, Palestine has been disposed of, in a series of four parallel lines:[1]

Sea	The Maritime Plain	The Central Range	The Jordan Valley	The Eastern Range	Desert

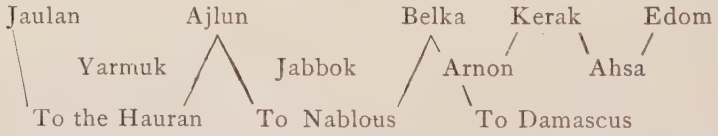
We left the sea at Sidon, crossed the maritime plain, climbed over the Central Range at the headwaters of the Jordan, and gave our time and strength to the examination of the second pair of these parallel lines.

The chapter on the Jordan Valley (p. 137) gives nothing new concerning its geography, but a careful study of the geology of the valley, in connection with the Eastern Range of mountains, has suggested some new and important considerations, which will appear as we proceed.

These mountains east of the Jordan are not peaks, though peaks are found near Hermon and in the Jaulan, but rather high table-lands, presenting an almost unbroken skyline to the observer west of the Jordan. For two centuries they have been shrouded in mystery impenetrable. During the last three decades they have begun to yield their secrets to the geographer, the geologist, the archæologist, the historian, and the traveller, and each of these departments of science has been treated to a series of brilliant surprises.

[1] G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.*, p. 49.

The apparently unbroken skyline has been found to contain at least four magnificent rifts, which cleave the Eastern Range into five divisions, whose history and remains differ from each other as widely as nations separated by the sea will differ. These four rifts drain sections of the eastern desert, sink completely through the mountain masses, revealing every feature of their geology, and issue in the greater rift of the Jordan Valley, at points from seven hundred to twelve hundred and ninety-two feet below the level of the Mediterranean. They have influenced the climate, the productions, the civilization, the commerce, and the government of the region in all ages. Their position and importance can be seen when represented thus :



The Jaulan, Ajlun, the Belka, Kerak, and Edom are the natural divisions, whose present names suggest memories that include the greater part of human history. The Yarmuk, the Jabbok, the Arnon, and the Ahsa are the rifts and the rivers, whose history also winds through forty centuries. Hauran, Nablous, and Damascus are the government centres, to which these trans-Jordanic provinces are now tributary, and strangely enough almost the same disposal of them was made by the Romans in the time of Christ.

When we journeyed along this "apparently unbroken skyline," we found, instead of an unbroken plateau, a variety of elevation and depression that was intensely interesting, and we were surprised to note how the mass was apparently lifted steadily higher and higher as we moved southward. A glance at the diagram (op. page 34) will show clearly that from Banias, neglecting the drop into the Galilee region and west of this sea, to a point above Petra, the trend is steadily upward from one thousand to nearly six thousand feet. Adding to this the twelve hundred and ninety feet for the depression of the Dead Sea, we have a range of more than seventy-one hundred feet of perpendicular changes, which in the month of February gave us a variety of climate, vegetation, and atmosphere that included almost as much as one of the continents would give us.

The diagram gives, in addition to the elevations and depressions, the location of our thirty camps:

4	were	below	sea	level,				
7	"	above	1000	feet	and	below	2000	feet,
8	"	"	2000	"	"	"	3000	"
7	"	"	3000	"	"	"	4000	"
3	"	"	4000	"	"	"	5000	"
and 1	was	"	5000	"				

Two of our camps, at El Abrash and Zaweira, were "dry" camps, and seven were at wells, varying in the foulness of their waters.

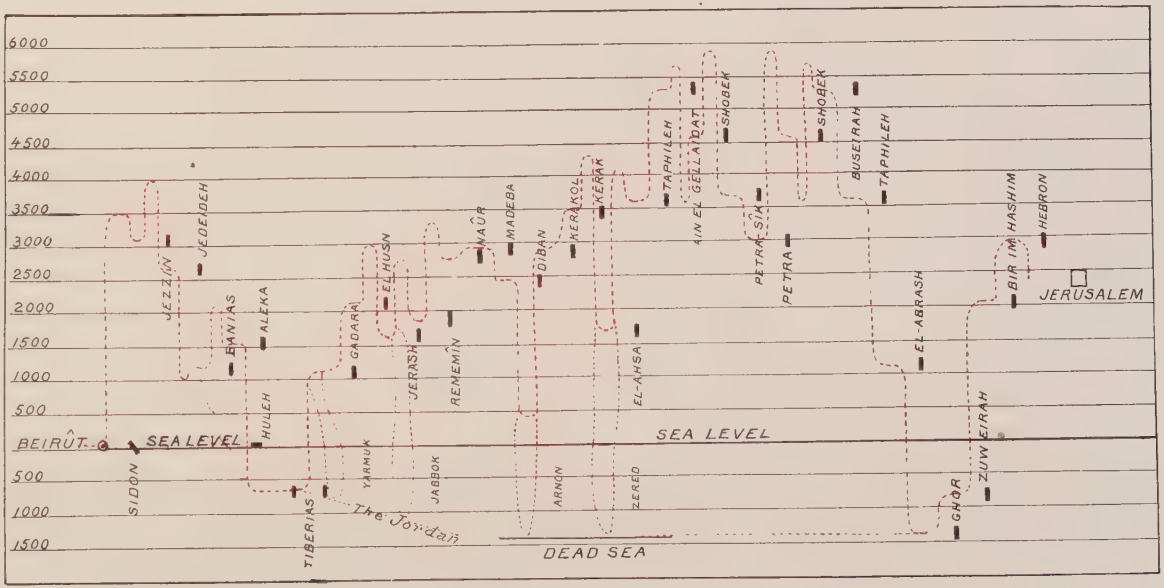
The red line of the diagram gives the general height of our course, and the black dotted lines of

the four rifts give the total depth of these, when viewed from the line of the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

It will be seen instantly that this wide range of elevation, combined with the examination of these deep rifts and the Jordan Valley, offers a large field to the geologist. It is also true that much of the geology of this region has been worked up from imaginary journeys made by observers west of the Jordan, or from other hasty journeys, along insignificant portions of the eastern bank. We have no apologies to make for our facts, no matter how they square with or contradict preconceived notions of these regions. Theories based upon those facts will stand or fall in the light of further investigations.

Two of these rifts pour their waters into the Jordan, and their fish are no doubt the same as those in the Jordan itself. But the Arnon and the Zered (Ahsa) empty into the Dead Sea, which has no living creatures that can be called fish in it. It will be interesting to find out whether the fishes of the Arnon and the Zered, and they are abundant, are the same as the Jordan fish, or whether they represent some other age zoölogically.

The "mysterious, unbroken skyline" of the trans-Jordanic region has proved a veritable paradise for the archæologist. The great majority of the names remain the same from the days of Moses and the early chapters of Genesis. Successive civilizations, Semitic, Greek, Roman, Christian,



CAMPING PLACES AND ELEVATIONS

Mohammedan, and Crusader, have strewn these mountains with ruins, that like the treasures of Egypt have been preserved in a marvellous way to our own times. In Egypt, it was the sands of the desert, carried by the winds, that guarded these remnants of antiquity. East of the Jordan, it was the waves of nomadic life, that "swept in again as remorselessly as the tides of the ocean" each time the early civilizations decayed and the strong arm of government weakened at Jerusalem, at Athens, at Rome, at Damascus, and at Constantinople. So it comes as a brilliant surprise that Kerak in Moab possesses the finest Crusader ruin extant; Madeba yields the most remarkable geographical curiosity, in its mosaic map, startling us with the unknown extent and wealth of the trans-Jordanic Christianity of those centuries after Christ; and then, not in classic Greece, but in Jerash, a city of the Decapolis, on one of the principal sources of the Jabbok, do we find the finest example of an ancient Greek city; not along the sea coast, nor in Judea itself, do we find the finest monumental records of Rome's power—her military roads and camps—but on the plains of Moab, and deep in the heart of the mountains of Edom, where are some of the best examples in existence; on the mountain tops in Petra, we find the best preserved example of an ancient "High Place," perhaps one of the oldest places of worship in the history of the race; while Petra itself was and is and will remain one of the strangest, most

beautiful, most enchanting spots upon the face of the earth.

To the historian, that "mysterious, unbroken skyline" has yielded a constantly growing mass of inscriptions, in half a dozen languages, Hebrew, Nabathean, Greek, Latin, Arabic, besides the epoch-making Moabite stone, and the map at Madeba. The coins are myriad, and belong to all ages, and the end of these discoveries has not yet come. These inscriptions are being edited, for the historians of all languages, by Dr. Brunnow.

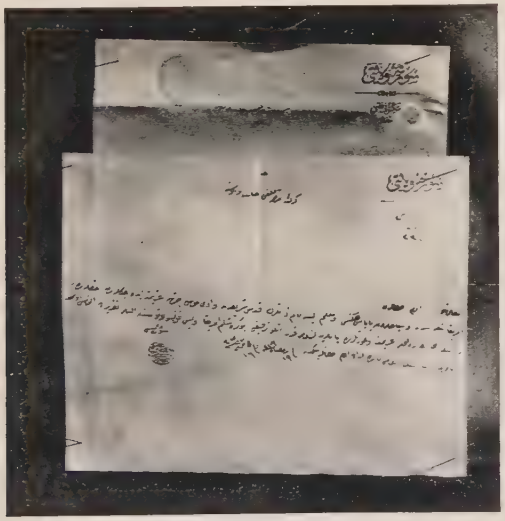
For the traveller the "mysterious, unbroken skyline" has all the zest of danger, the possibilities of hunger and thirst, and the living panorama of the modern inhabitants, moved, impelled, and inspired by traditions, superstitions, animosities, and representing all ages, all races, all religions, and all civilizations. The Arabs of the desert are the lineal descendants of the Ishmaelites; the Jewish colonies are the plaintive appeal of that ancient race for their God-given heritage; the Druzes of the Hauran are the remnant of insanity in the history of religions; the Circassians are the legions of hirelings, who may yet choose an emperor to rule over the ruins of empires; while the Turk, both soldier and official, represents one of the problems of the world to-day. While not agreeing that he is altogether "unspeakable," there are good reasons why any further discussion of that problem is out of place in this narrative. But his place and policy east of the Jordan exhibit both his virtues and his

THE AUTHORS

Franklin E. Hoskins

William Libbey

vices in high light. We came into contact with his virtues only, and gratefully record our thanks for the favors and protection granted. Many of the officials are far in advance of the system, and seem as completely out of place as the telegraph wires, strung the length of this Eastern Range, and the railroad, now being pushed down the edge of the desert. All these combine, however, to make the panorama of the future still more interesting, to the traveller who may be fortunate enough to pitch his tents east of that no longer "mysterious" nor "unbroken skyline."



FAC-SIMILE OF ORDER

CHAPTER II

SIDON

IT was Tuesday, February 4th, when all was ready for our journey, from the shores of ancient Phœnicia, to the deserts and mountains of Arabia Petræa. In order to secure an extra day in Sidon, we boarded the small steamer *Prince George* at 11 A.M., and went down in four hours by sea, leaving our caravan to follow us the following day. An hour beyond the lighthouse on the Beirut point, we saw the ancient Sidon, rising out of the sea. First the dark mass of the land castle, then the glistening houses, then the sea castle with its many-arched approach, until the beautiful city with its pleasant gardens, the winding shore, the remains of the ancient harbors, the little islands, stood clear as a cameo in an encircling frame formed by its orange groves, the snowy mountains behind, the blue arch of the sky above, and the bluer sea below it. The *Prince George* dropped anchor, between the castle and the island, and we were soon standing on the ruined quay, welcomed by the friends who came to meet us. The Mission circle includes two Princeton men,

41 SIDON FROM HILLALIYEH

Rev. W. K. Eddy (Princeton, 1875), and Rev. Paul Erdman (Princeton, 1894), Rev. Samuel Jessup, D.D. (Yale, 1860,) and Rev. G. A. Ford, D.D. (Williams, 1872). They led us through the streets of the present city, built over the debris of thirty-five centuries, among houses that look half that old, though of course they are not, until we climbed the stairs into their hospitable American homes, where pictures and books and flags spoke so eloquently of the loved homeland, so far beyond the sea. After a cup of afternoon tea, we climbed to the flat roof of Dr. Samuel Jessup's house, looked over the city and landscape, saw the *Prince George* leave the harbor, and head for Sarepta Point; we then descended for a walk about the city before sunset. We went north, south, east, and west, and then moved in a general southerly direction, until we stepped over the ruined wall and gateway to the south, in order to view the heaps of broken murex shells, brought here from the Grecian islands, out of whose bodies the ancient Sidonians extracted their beautiful purple dye. These heaps represent the accumulations of many centuries. Each little mollusk yielded a single drop of the secretion, so that large numbers of shells had to be broken in order to obtain even a small amount of dye. In the time of Cicero, wool double dyed with this color was called Dibapha, and was so excessively dear that a single pound weight cost a thousand denarii or about £35 ($175) sterling.

Our walk of an hour enabled us to completely

encircle the present city, which is walled and contains about ten thousand people. It has nine mosques, two of which were Crusader churches, baths, khans, and a number of more modern buildings, belonging mainly to foreigners. There are not lacking signs which point to an awakening of the town from its slumber of ages, chief among which is the completion of a carriage road to Beirut, promised and begun some forty years ago, but only completed this year.

When the sun had set, and the darkness had completely hidden the modern city and its people, we found time to review in outline the history of this Old World metropolis. At the World's Fair in Chicago there were said to be one or two people who could remember when the site of that marvellous city was a prairie without a human habitation. But this night we were sleeping where men have dwelt, struggled, and died for thousands of years—and commanded a vista, as it were, of millenia of human history. For Sidon is noticed frequently on the monuments of antiquity as early as 1500 B.C.[1] This gives it a history of at least thirty-four centuries. It was a Canaanitish city in the early days, being called in Genesis x., 15–19, the first-born of Canaan.

It flourished while the Children of Israel were bondsmen in Egypt; it was Phœnician in the days of Solomon, and remained one of the most important centres of commerce in all the passing ages.

[1] Tell el Amarna Tablets.

If Tyre was the London then Sidon was the Liverpool of antiquity. In coins of classic times Sidon is called the "mother of Kamba, Hippo, Citium, and Tyre." Certain it is that centuries before the Greek period, and long before the Egyptian conquest of Syria, Sidon was queen of the sea. Her port was the largest in all Phœnicia, being twenty acres in extent. Her gardens were famous, giving her a right to the epithet of "the flowery Sidon." Her caravans camped by the Euphrates and traded in every mart of that valley. The gods taught her children navigation, and showed the way to the setting sun. Her merchants made voyages over the sea, buying and selling, procuring weapons and ornaments for men, axes, swords, daggers inlaid with gold and ivory, bracelets, amulets, enamelled vases, glass work, stuffs dyed purple or embroidered with gay colors. When business was dull, or opportunity seemed safe, they turned pirates, and carried home cargoes of fair women and children, whom they sold as slaves. The Greeks called the Pole Star the "Phœnician Star." When the Sidonians were besieged by land they lived wholly from the sea, and centuries before Alexander the Great there was an oligarchy—a trust—of merchants and shipowners whose functions were hereditary, and who ruled over the motley collection of races attracted to the shores of Phœnicia.

The goddess Astartê, with her head surmounted by the horns of an ox, ruled over the destinies of the Sidonians. Not the unchaste Astartê, Shem-Baal

of the caves and groves, but a chaste and immaculate Astartê, a self-restrained and warlike virgin, sometimes identified with the moon, and at other times with the pale and frigid morning star. The Sidonians carried the worship of Astartê to all the colonies. Then there was the Baal-Sidon, and Eshmun, the god of medicine. These, too, travelled with her merchants, and their fame extends down through centuries of history. At Crete it was the daughter of a prince of Sidon, Europa, who was carried off by Zeus under the form of a bull.

There is no time here to trace the history of the city through succeeding ages.

Syria being the battle-field of the nations of antiquity, Sidon has always been in the thick of the fight; Assyrian, Egyptian, Chaldean, Persian, Seleucian, Roman, Saracen, and Crusader banners have floated over her walls; built, destroyed, and rebuilt more than a score of times, the city still stands as one of the landmarks of time.

Modern Sidon has proved a paradise for archæologists. Every year during the last century has brought forth some new treasure, from the deposits of the centuries; and every year of the present century will no doubt repeat the story. The black sarcophagus of Eshmunezer, who ruled Phœnicia and Sharon in the third century B.C., was found here in 1855 A.D. with its long Phœnician inscription. The curse in the epitaph, invoked on any one who dared disturb the tomb of the ancient

monarch, did not deter the French from carrying it away to Paris. Renan came and reaped a harvest of great value, and an international reputation, and minor workers have poured an unbroken stream of coins, seals, glass, lamps, and gold ornaments into the museums of Europe. Again in 1887 A.D., the archæological world was startled and delighted by the discovery of three magnificent sarcophagi, one of which, the so-called sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, is said to be the most beautiful and perfect relic of antiquity of its kind ever found in any land. These are now in Constantinople, and there is no reason why other objects, equally as wonderful and as interesting, should not be unearthed as the years go by.

Now and then a pot of gold rewards the toiling farmer or quarryman, and puts new madness into the veins of a large circle of men who have wasted their lives in searching for treasures which they never seem to find. Their women dream of treasures, they invoke the aid of astrologers and necromancers, they journey and dig by night, and they live and die poor, as the greatest treasures always seem to offer themselves to the humble and honest toiler.

It would require a volume simply to name the treasures that have come to sight within fifty years. They belong to and shed light upon almost every period of history. When the American missionaries dug shafts for the foundations of the Boys' School, they pierced through forty feet of debris

and came upon clean sea sand, on which were the charcoal remains of a fire that had been kindled there before the first city had been built. Every foot of this debris yielded up some broken pillar, or marble capital, or bit of pavement, and it is safe to say that there are many places in the city where the debris is thicker than at this spot. At another place in the street the remains of a magnificent granite bowl were taken out, some twelve feet across, the fragments of which are buried nearby at the present time. From another place came fragments of finely carved bulls, dating from the Persian occupation in the times of Nehemiah. Under Dr. Samuel Jessup's house, after the place was bought and cleared out, there was discovered what seems to have been a large Crusader hall, ninety-six feet long, twenty-six feet wide, and twenty-one feet to the centre of its heavy stone-arched roof; its side walls are thirteen feet four inches thick, and on the top of them was built the dwelling-house in which we spent the night.

This Crusader hall is now used by the Americans as a place of evangelical worship, and there is abundant seating room in the single-vaulted floor space for an audience of five hundred people. There is not a pile of buildings within or near the present city which does not conceal and preserve some monument or fragment that would delight the heart of the archæologist, while there is hardly a man who does not carry in his pockets, or woman who does not wear upon her person, some amulet,

or coin, or ornament that tells some part of the story of the ages past.

Wednesday, February 5th, we spent in Sidon, and the friends there had planned to give us a taste of the archæologist's pleasure, together with some more prosaic experiences of life, such as were now to be seen in the city. In the early morning we made our way to the "bath" and were treated to a kneading, scrubbing, and boiling that made our cuticles tingle for days. It took us half an hour to undress and make our way through the heated anterooms to the main "boilers." Half an hour was needed for the scrubbing process, and another half-hour for the return journey, the coffee, and the cooling. The attendant was "an artist," and when he gave each one of us his final touch, it was a startling one. I can describe my own sensation—I felt that, while I only heard the exclamation of my companions. He had soaped and lathered me, and scraped my back until I felt as limp as a rag. Then with a turn I was laid flat on the hot marble floor. Bending over me, as I lay prone, the attendant lapped my arms across my chest as tightly as he could pull them in the fashion of a knot, then he placed one knee firmly on them, to keep them in place, and putting both his hands under my head he pulled it forward with a jerk that made every vertebra in my backbone crunch in a way I had never experienced before. While we drank coffee outside, we amused ourselves by counting the towels used, and found them to number forty-five for three persons.

After breakfast we went to the Boys' School, and looked at the artesian well, with its stream fifteen feet below the surface of the ground. After this we rode across the plain to see the ruins of the Phœnician temple, recently uncovered by Makridi Beg.[1] The Phœnician cities have been razed to their foundations so many times in their long history that we have almost no example of their work, even though the Phœnicians are known to have been among the greatest builders of antiquity. Hence the peculiar interest attached to the most recent discovery. The inscriptions say plainly that "Bod-Ashtart, king of Sidon, son of king Eshmunazar, built this house for his god Eshmun." The date assigned is in the third or fourth century B.C.

This temple was built against the mountain slope, at a point where the Aweli River makes a bend toward the Mediterranean. It commands a grand view of the sea, the fertile plain, and the winding valley, of the purling river extending back into the heart of Lebanon, whose snow-clad peaks glistened against the blue sky in the east. These ruins are cyclopean; they are more than two hundred feet square, and if the lower walls were carried up to form a platform for a temple, then it must have stood from eighty to a hundred feet sheer above the river at its base. Portions of it have utterly disappeared, because the ruin has been used as a quarry for a long time. The inner stones, where

[1] Described by Dr. Hilprecht, in the *Sunday-School Times*, and more fully discussed by Prof. C. C. Torrey, in *The Open Court*, February, 1903.

51 TEMPLE OF ESHMUN

modern builders would use rubble, or even fill in with earth, were all carefully joined, and measured four by two and a half by eight feet each.

One very curious fact connected with this temple points to the desire and efforts of the builders to rear something that would defy the ravages of time, and at the same time prevent any later generation, or conquerors, from robbing the builders of the glory they rightly deserved. All students and archæologists are familiar with the way in which one king or conqueror has removed the name of a predecessor from the inscription on a monument or building, and replaced it by his own, claiming to have reared the fabric, and introducing confusion in the minds of those who come centuries later. The Phœnician builders of these walls cut at least five inscriptions on the ends of the huge stones, and then built these stones into their walls in such a way that the inscriptions could never be discovered by any human eye, or defaced by any hostile hand, until the temple had been torn away and the very foundations dug up out of the earth. Centuries after every wave of conquering vandals has spent itself, modern explorers have unearthed this inscription, and can give due credit to those ancient toilers, who seemed inspired with the desire to make their memories immortal when they built this structure.

On our way back we turned aside to the cavity in a wheat field from which they took the famous "Alexander" sarcophagus in 1887. We lunched

in a modern graveyard, where some workmen had struck a sarcophagus a few days before, and this sarcophagus had been carefully reserved for Professor Libbey, in order that he might open it with his own hands. The soil above it was not a foot deep, and the graveyard wall had been built within six inches of the head of it. A tree had been planted on either side of it, not three feet away, and yet it had never been seen. When the time came for opening it, the problem was to remove the heavy lid, and the ordinary way is to break such a lid in half. It was a sight to see the Professor wielding a sledge hammer on that remnant of antiquity. It was of hard limestone, but yielded to the repeated blows, and a short iron bar soon laid the lower half on one side. There was a layer, eight inches deep, of the finest sediment in the bottom, which had silted in during the two thousand years of its history. This earth was scooped out carefully by our hands, and carried in a basket to a clean space in the graveyard. The man who crawled down under the broken lid worked like a mole and became excited as he neared the head, where articles of value are always found. In his haste and in the darkness, his own body shutting out the daylight, he broke one of the two iridescent tear-bottles, but succeeded in getting the other out whole, a beautiful one, about six inches in height. Then we turned to the mass of soft and moist clay, which represented the ashes of the dead person, together with what had silted in with the

percolating water, and spreading it out carefully in the sun, we sifted it ounce by ounce through our fingers, and after an hour's search had secured two copper coins, two gold earrings, and one gold nose-ring of curious pattern. We knew then that the owner of the sarcophagus was a woman, buried perhaps twenty centuries ago, but no other trace of her remained, except a few teeth, which crumbled as we handled them.

From this point we rode up the slopes to the buildings and farm of the Gerard Institute, an industrial school for boys, part of whose plant is still in the old city, and this other part is located on the hills half an hour away, within the borders of Lebanon. The Institute is the outgrowth and development of a Mission Training School, begun years ago in Sidon. Mrs. George Wood, of New York, has been its most generous financial patron, but she has not given money alone, but came herself, and has been for some five years working personally among the boys. The Mission gracefully changed the name from "Sidon Training School" to that of "Gerard Institute," out of appreciation of her loving services, Gerard being Mrs. Wood's maiden name. The main building at this location is meant for an orphanage. About twenty orphans are already housed and cared for. The plan is to remove the whole establishment out of the old city, to a site on the hill crest, whenever money is secured for the necessary buildings.

We were especially interested in the develop-

ment of the large farm. Here the one prime necessity is the water. Hence much time and expense have already been given to the digging out and following up of the small trickling springs which appear at several points on the lower slopes. One of these is now a fine fountain, whose waters make tenfold more valuable the lands below it. Not far away a tunnel, a thousand feet long, has been cut into a hillside, in order to tap three artesian wells which had been bored, and which would not flow to the surface. The tunnel, while yielding enough water to justify its expense, is not a success, because the water in the three wells, after standing at a certain level for two years, suddenly dropped twelve feet, and by so doing was a foot or two below the level of the tunnel.

In the hopes of securing more water, Dr. George A. Ford has given five years of effort and expended a large sum of money in artesian wells. A lady in Cleveland, in 1894, gave a sum to purchase a well-boring outfit. A firm in Pittsburgh generously gave assistance and advice, and machinery for boring a thousand feet was secured and sent out. An experienced engineer from the oil regions came with this outfit and remained for nearly five years. The first well was bored in the school premises of the Academy in the old city of Sidon. The rock was struck at forty feet and at two hundred and fifty feet a fine stream of water was tapped, which rose to within fifteen feet of the surface. Then began a long series of efforts to coax that

water to rise. In the course of many months they sunk the well to six hundred and fifty feet, then to nine hundred and sixty-five feet, and while there seemed to be rivers of water at many depths, none of the streams would come to the surface. Casing, sandbags, plugs, and everything possible was tried, but there the water stood fifteen feet below the surface. It has, however, been a boon to the city, because a horse-power pump was rigged, and for three years the whole community drank of the pure artesian flow.

Along in 1898, it was decided to sink another well about a hundred feet away in the same yard. At six hundred feet a fine flow was found, and now a curious discovery was made. This stream rose a little higher than that in the first well. By cutting off the pipe two feet below the top of the column of water, a flow of forty thousand gallons hourly was obtained. Then a tunnel was cut between the two wells, and this heavy overflow poured into the cavity around the pipe of the other well, *where it disappeared as in a mill race!* So finally a large hydraulic ram was placed in the tunnel, which lifts about forty cubic meters of water daily to a tank thirty-five feet above it, and this supplies all the school community, and keeps a small stream flowing for the city people outside. So Yankee ingenuity has made a stream flow out of two wells that would not work singly. How this great treasure of pure water can be utilized, in a city and land that need it, is the problem yet to be solved.

Fourteen other wells were bored on the farm, two miles away from the city, all of which have abundant water in them, but at a depth of from one hundred to two hundred and fifty feet below the surface. The attempt to tap three of them, by means of a tunnel, has just been referred to, and if any one of these wells could ever be induced to flow, the water would be worth all that has been spent upon the undertaking.

The consensus of opinion among those who are conversant with such matters seems to be, that they ought to have a larger outfit, capable of boring two thousand feet, and then they might hope for flowing wells. Such a demonstration would be an inestimable blessing to all Syria, and so they are waiting for some good Samaritan to come along and provide a more powerful boring appliance.

Our next point of interest was the old Necropolis of Sidon, which extended for miles around the city north, east, and south. Many of the tombs were rifled centuries ago, others were opened by quarrymen, but thousands were washed full of soft earth, then covered over and completely forgotten. The greatest discoveries have been made in the wide wheat fields and even in the orange gardens. Irrigation has for centuries been carrying soft loam over the plain, filling in tombs and quarries, and then covering the original rock with soil from five to fifteen feet deep. Renan's researches were made, and all the tombs he opened were found below the open fields. The Alexander sarcophagi were found

59 ALEXANDER SARCOPHAGUS

among some olive trees, which are two or three hundred years old. People in digging for any one of a dozen purposes strike the native rock. Groping along its face they come to a stairway or a box-like opening. Such a discovery always excites everybody, because such a stairway or opening means a tomb or series of such tombs beneath it, and if they have not been rifled centuries ago, they are sure to yield treasures and antiques of value.

Not a month passes in any year without the opening of a tomb. There are men who ostensibly are quarrymen, but whose nerves and muscles are inspired by the certainty of breaking through, from time to time, into tombs and tomb chambers. There are others who have a kind of semi-official permit to carry on the business systematically. We were privileged to visit an excavation and saw the work actually in progress. Riding over the plain and among the wheat fields we were led toward a small building where there was only a single person visible, who was watching for our coming. Tying our horses among some small trees, we were led towards an old quarry and suddenly came to a deep cavity, in which a half-dozen men and boys were working like beavers. They were passing up baskets of the richest loam and forming a high breastwork round the pit, effectually screening themselves from all observation. The workers who were visible were only a small part of the larger number inside, who were invisible.

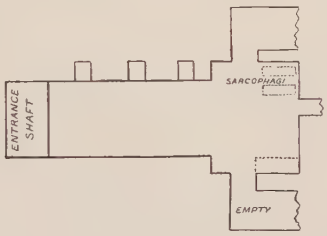
After divesting ourselves of our outer clothing,

we climbed down the pit, with the aid of a rope attached to a tripod, until we came to the rock, and there found an opening about eight feet long and two feet wide, through which we ducked and squeezed and soon were where we could stand nearly upright. Nearly a dozen men and boys now appeared, some bearing candles, others tools, and all covered with the soft cool mud. When our eyes had become accustomed to the dim light, we found ourselves in a long passageway extending some fifty or sixty feet, and ending in a chamber, around which were ranged rows of sarcophagi, built firmly into its sides.

Opening out of this main passageway were at least a half-dozen other chambers of similar size and shape, and these the men were occupied in clearing of the soft soil, which had completely filled them centuries ago. Groping our way into a room, we found the head men of the enterprise. They had uncovered a series of sarcophagi, and only waited our arrival to empty them of the soil and show us what they might contain. With bars and wedges they lifted the heavy lids, which fell into several pieces, revealing the fact that this tomb must have been rifled long ago. Slowly they emptied the cavity and as they came to the very bottom, all but the head men were obliged to retire, so that none but these ever know whether they find anything valuable or not. We saw no Phœnician glass, and whether the moist clay yielded any gold jewelry we did not wait to see,

but having made our way back to the opening, we climbed out into the sunshine, after having been an hour in the earth.

The sarcophagi were carved, and underneath and below one row was a nest of leaden sarcophagi, which would be rifled in turn. Most of the sarcophagi were of limestone, though there were some pieces of marble built into the walls. The sarcophagi found have been composed of black basalt, as that of Ashmunezer; of finest Parian marble, as that of Alexander; of granite and all the stones of the country. One often wonders how they moved such heavy burdens across the plains and lowered them into their tomb chambers.



That they made extensive use of rollers on smooth planes is certain. The way they lowered these heavy sarcophagi down these shafts ten, fifteen and forty feet was an ingenious one. Women and children with baskets filled the shaft, from bottom to top, with clean dry sea sand. The sarcophagus was then trundled on to the sand and the workers set to burrowing the sand away from it all round, allowing the heavy weight to sink gently, foot by foot, into its dark resting-place.

It was intensely interesting to note all through this day's trip the great number of granite columns evidently from Egypt and others in marble from Greece which marked the sides of the road, while here and there a sarcophagus was seen serving a practical purpose as a watering-trough or even as a wash tub.

When we reached home in the evening we were tired enough after such a full day. We fain would have spent more time in the Sidon homes, but our trip was to begin the next day. After interviews with sellers of antiquities, and some final charges to our camp followers, we dreamt of antiquities and the glories of the ancient world.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE SEACOAST TO THE JORDAN VALLEY

INSTEAD of going to Damascus and south via Kefr Howr to Banias, we planned to climb from the seacoast over Lebanon, in order to gain some of the famous views of the whole country, and at the same time to study the deep clefts and valleys which mark the breaking down of Lebanon, the Bukaa (Cœla-Syria), Anti-Lebanon, and the beginning of the Jordan Valley. The waters of the Litany and the head-waters of the Jordan are very near to each other at several points, and the divide between the two systems is a low one.

Even though it was February we hoped for clear skies, sure that the luminous winter atmosphere would give us views which the misty, heated atmosphere of summer would mask or completely hide from us.

Thursday, February the 6th, 1902, dawned clear and cool. We left Sidon at 8 A.M., and Dr. Samuel Jessup went with us out of the city, and up through the gardens for more than an hour. Beautiful views of Sidon sitting in the sea were the principal

features of this first part of our trip. Our ride up the narrow backs of land, connecting the peaks and smaller hills with the main mountain, revealed other vistas which grew more and more striking.

This littoral plain is one of the interesting characteristics of Palestine. Of no great height above the sea, and usually well watered, it is the choicest portion of the whole land. Its vegetation is varied, but with marked tropical features. The foliage is luxuriant, and the flowers and vines are pleasing to all the senses. Its carpet of green was in sharp contrast with the comparatively burnt and gray-colored foot-hills. Indeed this is a land of contrasts. Within narrow limits we have the hot-house growths of the tropics, while within plain sight are the perpetual snows of the Arctic. In between these two extremes, most of the varieties of climate and of physical nature are to be found.

While these appealed to us, however, they were but a portion of the crowding scenes which memory brought back. The connected chain of the historical events which made these regions important from the earliest times wove about them the charm of romance. The finding of a mass of broken shells upon these shores took us back to the days when the "royal purple" obtained its finest lustre from the humble creatures who lived in them. The harbor took us back to the beginnings of commerce when the undaunted inhabitants of these places were the pioneer traffic-managers of the Mediterranean trade; and later, when Solomon, that giant

organizer of ocean commerce, made it one of the links in the chain which he perfected between the Far East and the Western world, its importance was materially increased.

Its days of glory are past, and its ruined castles stand the mute witnesses of its last struggle with fate. Centuries have relentlessly moved over it, carrying with them almost every trace of its career. The place had apparently been wiped out of existence, when a well, sunk in the surface of its plain, revealed in the skilfully constructed vaulted chambers in the rocks below its soil, treasures which told an unexpected story in the history of man. The archæologists of the world feasted their eyes upon products of art, which had been preserved in this strange way, out of the sight of the marauding hosts which had swept over it.

It was a surprise to find a long-talked-of carriage road, winding in and out among the valleys, around pine-clad steeps, among the olive trees, and along steep declivities.

About ten o'clock we overtook and passed our caravan, which was flying two flags, the Turkish and the American. It was made up of four loaded mules, three donkeys, and a pack horse, on which our white-capped cook was seated, with a great assortment of saddlebags and baskets containing meat and vegetables beneath him. Counting the four muleteers and the cook there were five men and eight animals, while we were also five men and five horses, making twenty-three living creatures in

all. Why we count men and animals will be better understood when we come to regions where food and water are both scarce.

By 3 P.M. we had risen eleven hundred metres (3600 feet), and passed banks of snow among the pine trees. Shortly after we had begun to descend a little, and we looked into the Jezzin Valley, and far away saw the splendid waterfall dropping one hundred and thirty feet, over the cliff into the clouds of foam at its base.

A little below the waterfall we could see the mouth of Fakhr ed Din's cave, and the marks of the French sappers and miners who attempted to dislodge the doughty old chief from his lair. He had defied the government in Sidon, had filled up the harbor to keep war vessels from entering, and when at last driven out he fled to Jezzin for refuge. He remained in this cave until the chisels of the sappers came up from beneath into the rug on which he was seated. Constantinople and a bow-string are the tail-pieces to his closing chapter.

In Jezzin we found our camp pitched under the big walnut trees by the side of the rushing stream which breaks from the mountain near by and forms one of the finest fountains in Lebanon. We had many callers at our tents and one of them, a native teacher, brought us a present of olives and cheese and a roll of native bread.

February 7th stands out as one of the bright days of our trip. Leaving Jezzin about 8 A.M. we reached Kefr Huneh in two hours, and then climbed

69 Gorge below Jezzin

higher and higher, until we were on the backbone of Lebanon, four thousand feet above the sea, at exactly the point where Lebanon begins to break down into the hills of Naphtali. Several interesting spots were passed where glacial grooves were plainly seen in places recently freed from rubbish and debris. The view was superb and worth many a day's journey to behold. Hermon lay to the east across the Bukaa, apparently within a stone's throw, and, while we were four thousand feet above sea-level, the mountain towered six thousand feet farther into the cloudless sky. We could see his crown of snow, his oak-clad shoulders, his girdle of olive trees.

We had hoped for a cloudless day and we were favored with a rare day even for sunny Syria. Toward the west and north the horizon, for a third of its circumference, was the blue rim of the sea, as clear and as sharp as a mirror of steel, against the softer blue of the sky above.

Sidon, twenty miles away, half girdled with its orange gardens, glistened in the sunlight, its white houses and minarets crowded between the darker masses of the sea castle and the castle behind the city, and all outlined against the Mediterranean, an exquisitely beautiful miniature. Between us and the city were the green slopes and smiling valleys, up which we had been climbing for a day and a half.

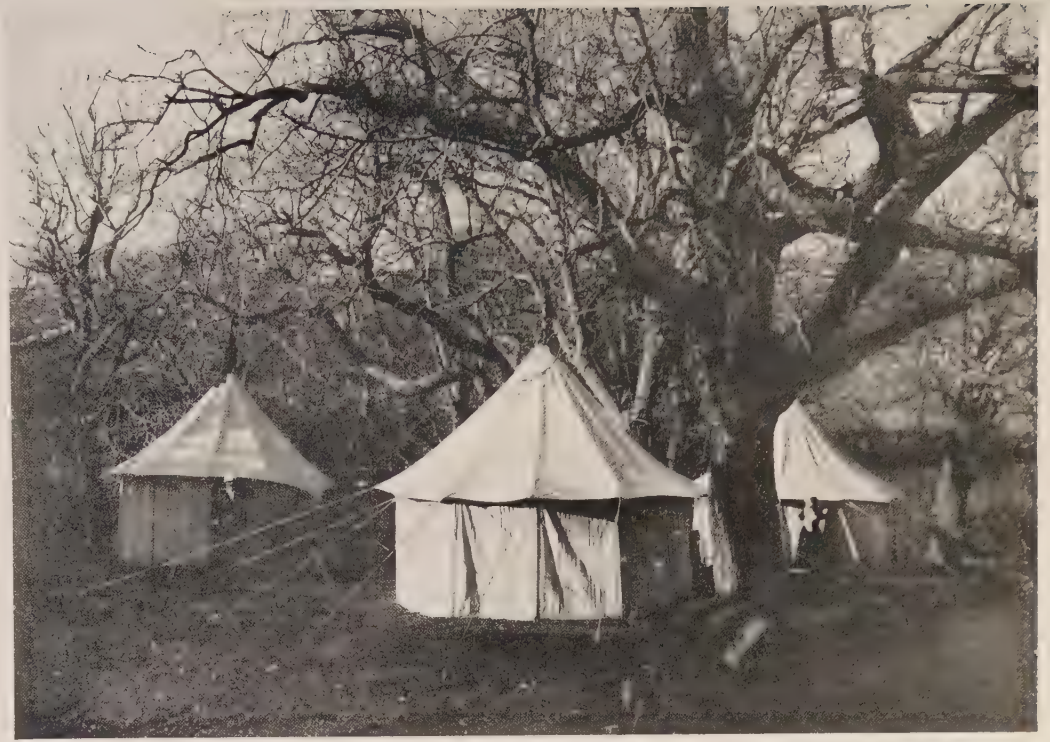
South of Sidon the white line of the seashore stretched to Tyre, broken here and there by a

bolder spur of the mountain. Below the "Ladder of Tyre" circled the Bay of Acre, with the head of Mount Carmel well out at sea, while the mountain's huge back stretched across the landscape like a wall. All the hills of Naphtali, the coasts of Asher, most of Zebulon and Issachar, with a hundred sites famous in sacred and ancient history, lay in full view.

The southern horizon was broken in the centre by a sharp, deep notch, whose sides were those of a precipice and not the slopes of a mountain. This notch marked the valley of the Jordan, whose course we could trace almost from end to end. The waters of the Dead Sea lay below the line of sight but its cleft was clearly visible.

Galilee sparkled like an emerald in its setting of gray mountains, while the Upper Jordan and Merom lay almost at our feet. East of the Jordan the skyline was as straight as though made with a ruler, and long we tarried in trying to make out where Ajlun, Gilead, Moab, and Edom joined and melted into each other—for these were the lands of lawlessness and mystery, toward which we were eagerly making our way.

Eastward the horizon was covered by Mount Hermon, grand old sheikh of the mountains. We had obtained a distant view of Hermon from Damascus and had enjoyed it, but now the mountain, even though many miles away, seemed apparently within a stone's throw. From where we stood Hermon's hoary head, crowned with a diadem of



73 Our First Camp—Jezzin

snow dazzling in its spotless purity, towered above us into the crystalline atmosphere. Earth with its cares, its tragedies, and its meannesses seemed far, far away from that flood of everlasting sunshine. Human history like the landscape seemed glorified; the near and the far crowded the line of vision, melting into each other in that upward trend which is lifting our race upward in spite of individual failures.

Sidon and the Phœnicians, Sarepta and the widow, Tyre and Alexander the Great, Acre and the Crusaders, Carmel and Elijah, Esdraelon and Napoleon, Shunem and the Shunemite, Jordan and John the Baptist, Galilee with Christ and His disciples, Merom and Joshua, Gilead, Moab, and Edom with Moses, Aaron, and the Children of Israel, Hermon and the Transfiguration,—the eye sweeping from ancient Phœnicia through the Holy Land, over Jordan, and up to Hermon's summit,—from the dawn of history through forty centuries of God's dealings with men, to the mount of the Transfiguration, where the Son of God, as through a rift in the veil, showed us something of the glory yet to be revealed,—is an outlook that could not be surpassed except from the battlements of heaven!

From this matchless view we plunged down the eastern slope and were soon looking into the gorge of the Litany, which resembles in many places a gigantic railroad cutting, the slant of the sides reaching up for five to eight hundred feet at the

angle of an artificial embankment. The road at many places was too dangerous or too steep to ride with any comfort and we walked for many miles. In less than two and a half hours we had dropped twenty-five hundred feet and found ourselves beside the swiftly flowing river. Our road led over the bridge at Burghuz and an hour later we reached camping quarters in Jedeideh.

Jedeideh is a large Christian town of several thousand people, and differs from every other in the region in the extent of ground it covers. It reminds one of a Bedawin encampment, because the houses are all so far apart. Built for a mile or more along a hilltop, facing the east, it commands magnificent views of Hermon.

The people have always been as open and as free as the location of their city. They have lived with and show many of the characteristics of the Arabs of the desert. They own fine horses; they dress in Bedawin costume, and in their homes they practise the hospitality of their cousins from the black tents. They are a most delightful people to visit and dwell among.

The men have been accustomed for generations to trade among the Arabs of the Jaulan, the Belka, and farther east and south. They leave home with a caravan of merchandise, and after many days journey they settle down among the Bedawin, and remain for months and even years without returning to their native town. Ready money has always been scarce among the Bedawin, and hence their

77 Gorge of the Litany at Burghuz

payments are made in wool, in sheep, in cattle, and in semmen (native butter used for all cooking purposes), for which Jedeideh has always been a favorite market place.

Jedeideh merchants carry cut nails, horseshoes, common copper cooking vessels, coffee, rice, not a few firearms, shot, and large quantities of muslin, denim, and cheap colored stuffs.

One man in this village has lived for years by vaccinating the Bedawin, who have had many bad seasons with smallpox. This man's little leather pouch, with its bits of scab, its needles and home-made lances, would amuse a modern physician, and yet it is perfectly certain that this humble camp follower has been a greater benefactor to his race than many a dozen practitioners in other lands.

The government has for years been trying to get the Bedawin tribes living near at hand to settle down and live to some extent by ploughing and sowing the land. Whenever any of them can be so persuaded, these Jedeideh men have been the promoters of husbandry, providing ploughs and ploughmen, and handling the crops.

This has led to many Jedeideh people taking up lands and settling permanently in the trans-Jordanic region. So in camping one night at Jedeideh we were able to secure much information and many valuable suggestions as to routes and fords east of the Jordan.

While calling upon a native teacher we came into contact with a link between the ancient and

the modern world. He was a Jedeideh man, who had spent his life among the Bedawin, and had just come home from the country toward which our faces were set—the land of Gilead.

His dress was in every respect that of a well-to-do Bedawy; his language that of the desert, his sharp eyes, his clear complexion, all told of his life in the sunshine and under the stars. On the desert side he is owner of a mill and much ploughed land at Jabesh Gilead (Judges xxi., 8). His home is in Jedeideh, and he has two sons in the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut, the one a senior in the Collegiate and the other in the Preparatory department.

What is true of this man individually is true of Jedeideh as a whole. Its back is toward the desert, but its face is toward the modern world. All the old men, and most of the middle-aged men, have lived and traded with the Arabs of the desert, east and south of the Jordan Valley. But those who were born since 1860, when the town suffered greatly in the massacres, have entered the schools and through them the new life of Syria.

At the burning of the town by the Druzes, the people fled coastward into the region of Tyre, and northward into Sidon and Beirut. Many widows and orphans never returned.

The children entered the boarding-schools or the day-schools of the American Mission, and coming from a virile stock they have made their mark. First came a graduation of school-teachers, men

and women, then a smaller circle of strong preachers, and along with them a larger number of energetic and well-to-do business men, who can be found at the front in every city in Syria.

As the government tightened its grip upon the Bedawin and the Bedawin power, this desert life became too small a sphere for the active Jedeideh people, and the town languished during the eighties, until the emigration fever, which came in 1890.

The Bethlehemites rediscovered America in 1876, when they attended the Centennial in Philadelphia. The people of Bsherry and northern Lebanon sailed into New York Harbor about 1883, but it was not until about 1890 that the Jedeideh people began to make for Port Said, where they invariably "took the first steamer," caring little whether it was headed for Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, Brazil, or the United States. Their roving desert ancestry, their ability to care for themselves under all circumstances, seem to have fitted them about as well for the sea as for the land.

As a result, during a period of twelve years there have gone out of Jedeideh not less than twenty-five hundred young men and young women, who are scattered all over the earth. They are wealthy, enterprising merchants in Manchester, in Sydney, in Rio Janeiro, and Chicago; they are practising physicians in Australia and in Brazil; they are owners of land in the Argentine and in

the United States, and are found in the mining towns from Cape Nome to Broken Hill.

The little post-office that was established in 1880, and remained despised and unnoticed except by government officials for many years, has now become the centre of Jedeideh life, as well as for all the towns within a radius of ten or fifteen miles, because there is not a family in all the region of Mount Hermon which has not sent a son, or a daughter, or a father, into the big world beyond, and from whom they watch for tidings, or drafts on London.

The American Mission opened work in this region at Hasbeya before the massacre in 1860 and in Jedeideh a little later. Since then it has been a parent station. The church became the first self-supporting church in all Syria and while for a time it languished with the fortunes of the town, it promises to recover and be a bright beacon in all that region.

Its schools have been phenomenal, the pupils at times reaching the number of four hundred boys and two hundred girls, while their contributions toward the support of the schools, in the form of monthly fees, have far exceeded every other out-station in the Syria Mission.

William M. Thomson, Dr. Cornelius Van Dyck, Dr. W. W. Eddy, Rev. J. E. Ford, and Dr. Samuel Jessup have all loved to labor in the Jedeideh field and its neighboring region.

Just below the town of Jedeideh is one of the

finest pieces of meadow-land in all Syria. Its ancient name, Ijon (1 Kings xv., 29), possibly means "fountains," and its modern name, Merj Aiyun, meaning "fountain meadow," is practically the same.

It is some three miles wide by eight miles long and abounds in water flowing from all sides. When once down in the meadow and with one's back turned toward Hermon and Lebanon one could almost believe himself transported to the valley of the Mohawk, in New York State.

Green fields stretch for miles, divided by watercourses and dotted by orchards of fig, mulberry, and olive trees. As we crossed this meadow we paused many times to look back and enjoy the enchanting view of Lebanon to the left and Hermon to the right of the cleft of Cœle Syria. At its southern end we could just catch a glimpse of one of the modern Jewish colonies, called Metulleh, on the site of the ancient Abel-beth-maachah (1 Kings xv., 20). Then turning sharply into a notch eastward, we climbed the low divide between the Litany and the Jordan Valley, and after an hour among the limestone and lava boulders and a drop of seven hundred feet, we bathed our horses' feet in the Hasbany, the central river which helps to form the Jordan, and sat down to rest through the noonday heat. This stream rises farther north than either of the other three bodies of water which unite with it to form the main river. The largest amount of water is contributed to the

Jordan from the source at Banias, but structurally this river lies in the axis of the valley.

This whole country might well be called the land of underground rivers, because of the large number of them which burst fully formed from beneath the limestone ledges. We had already seen such a source at Jezzin which all too plainly betrayed the secret of its origin. The fractured limestone ledges enable the water, coming from many different parts of the mass, to assemble in considerable volume before a favorable opportunity is offered for its escape. This feature also probably accounts for the absence of streams in localities where nature at one time intended one to exist and made a channel for it; but active erosion within the mass determined the flow of its waters along another course—the ancient pathway being only occupied when there is an excess of surface water.

The eastern wall of the main valley, which rose like a huge rampart across the sky, claimed our attention from this time on as we journeyed towards it. It seemed plainly to be composed of volcanic rocks and it was easy to see where this dark mass abutted against the shoulder of Hermon with its lighter colored limestone rocks. The contrast in color alone was sufficiently striking, but the great extent of the mass was still more so. As far as the eye could reach the long horizontal line was to be seen almost unbroken. It looked as though a tremendous mass of lava had welled up from the far east and rolled onward to this point and then

had stopped and become solid. This, however, was only its appearance, for from the character of the country it was probable that the lava had merely pushed its way across the top of the limestone mass and then passing over its face had masked its character completely.

Both before and after we had crossed the Hasbany ford we had passed through a great deal of lava but as we approached Banias we came upon the limestone once more and did not leave it until we commenced to climb the eastern cliffs of the Jaulan. This western lava bed seems to be isolated, and occurring near a region of rupture, marked by the low divide to the westward, may point to its being a separate centre of volcanic activity of no great violence.

CHAPTER IV

BANIAS AND THE UPPER JORDAN

CÆSAREA PHILIPPI

GEOGRAPHICALLY and geologically the Jordan River and its valley are the strangest feature of our planet, and they have linked themselves most wonderfully with the history of our race. We had planned to strike the head-waters of the river and follow its course through Galilee to its end, crossing the stream at as many points as we possibly could, and noting all the peculiarities of its winding existence.

We were led to modify this plan somewhat for a number of good reasons. It was February, and while the mud was not specially heavy anywhere, the chance of being caught in a winter storm, between Beisan and Jericho, was not to be lightly taken with our heavy baggage train. We also found the water in the river higher than is usual at this season, so that fords crossed easily in October were now impassable.

The river still fulfils its ancient function as the "Great Divider." This could all be changed by a

87 Banias and Subeibeh Castle

few bridges, but until these are built the dwellers on either side will remain strangers, or enemies, to each other. It may be a surprise to many to learn that in its course of one hundred miles there are only three bridges; one between Merom and the Sea of Galilee; a second two hours below the sea, and the third at Jericho. There are perhaps a dozen fording places, which are passable at certain seasons of the year, but these are known only to the dwellers in the immediate neighborhood of each ford. Many ancient bridges have been washed away by the yearly floods or the rarer waterspouts. The ruins of some five or six such structures can be found just below the Sea of Galilee.

Coming as we did from the seacoast, over Lebanon, and across the Merj Aiyun, we struck first the Nahr Bareighit or Flea River, the smallest of the four sources of the Jordan. Then the Hasbany, which never runs dry, and at this season was a very respectable river. Its source just north of Hasbeya is a most beautiful fountain, whose cool waters gushing up from gravel beds make it a favorite resort for all the dwellers in that region.

Resting there in the warm sunshine beside its gentle current, and in full view of the mountain height where we stood just twenty-four hours before, we began to realize that we had made a descent of three thousand feet. On Lebanon among the snow banks the winds were keen and the air bracing; by the Jordan the grass was green, the air was balmy, and the heat of the sun, even in

February, enough to make us wish for the shade of a rock or a tree.

The plain of the Huleh (Merom) stretched for miles and miles, like a sea at the base of Hermon, dotted with trees and clumps of bushes. Here were acre upon acre of green pasture, in which grazed thousands of sleek cattle, and tens of thousands of sheep and goats were to be seen.

Jordan means as much to modern Syria as it did to ancient Israel, though perhaps in a different way. An instance of this is found in the fact that there are hundreds of rude mills for grinding wheat on the short streams which burst from the side of the valley and flow into the Jordan; to these come the dwellers on either side, to grind their grain in winter and summer. The whole valley is a huge hothouse, in which the vegetation is always rank and green.

When Lebanon and Hermon and the Bukaa are covered with snow and swept by cold winds and storms of rain, the people drive their flocks for miles and spend months around these head-waters, in the luxuriant pasture-lands. So it comes about that villagers and tribes living many miles away claim the right to come and pasture their flocks in the valley. The Bedawin from the east and the inhabitants of the west meet here to barter, to bicker, to plunder, and to shed each other's blood.

All the birds of passage which summer in Europe and winter in Egypt wing their flight through

THE MERJ AIYUN

the Jordan Valley. At certain seasons one can see ten thousand storks in a single flock, feeding with the cattle, and another ten thousand rising in graceful circles and then stretching away in a vanishing line, as they disappear in the sky on their journey.

Then about the Huleh and the Sea of Galilee can be found some of the best hunting in all Syria. Partridges and francolin and woodcock abound, and one rarely crosses the plains, above or below the sea, without starting a flock of gazelles. About the Dead Sea are many leopards, and among the rocks of Petra one catches a glimpse now and then of the ibex.

From the Hasbany River to the great fountain at Banias is a lovely ride of two hours, over rolling pastures and among stately oak trees. While among the pastures we saw a pretty sight, which we called "A happy family reunion." The shepherds at this season take the lambs away from the mother sheep at night, lest the lambs drink up all the milk and the Bedawin get none. When morning comes, one shepherd drives the sheep all away on one hill and another shepherd takes the lambs off upon another, and the poor little lambs have a rather hard time eating grass when they want nothing but warm milk. Thus they are kept apart all morning, and at noon the shepherds milk the sheep to make lebn and cheese. Then in the afternoon they allow the lambs to come to their "mammies." While riding along about 2 P.M. we saw

two flocks of large white sheep, with their shepherds near by. Then off on another hill we saw about forty little lambs making such a noise that it would have attracted attention anywhere. The time of separation was up, and the shepherd of the lambs had given them permission to run toward the mother sheep. What a sight these little lambs made, running as hard as their little legs could carry them, and bleating as loud as their little throats could bleat! The mothers stopped feeding, lifted up their heads, looked toward the lambs, and waited. As the noisy little fellows came nearer, each mother sheep seemed to recognize her baby's voice and say "Ya ibny" (Oh, my son!), and a moment later the mother sheep all started out to meet the baby lambs, and each one knew her own. It was as pretty a sight as one could wish to see, and, occurring in the wilderness, was particularly touching.

Once among the oak trees the beauties of this ancient site began to grow upon us. Our road swung round a spur of Hermon, and we entered one of the loveliest nooks in all Syria, with Banias at its apex. Tell el Kady, the plain of the Huleh, and the lake lay behind us. On either side of the ancient road were tangled masses of vegetation from among which appeared pillars, walls, and traces of ruins innumerable. On the right, the Banias source of the Jordan went rushing through its deep gully toward the lake, while Hermon's lower mass reared itself grandly in front, its base girdled with orchards

95 SUBEIBEH AND MOUNT HERMON, FROM NEAR AIN FET

of olive trees, while one of its upper slopes, green with forests of oak, was capped by the ruins of Subeibeh.

As the sides of the valley contract the beds of ruins, the winding roads, the babbling brooks, the trees, the flowers, the underbrush, all combine to form a picture that does not easily fade.

The town of Banias, however, is about as dismal a contrast to the natural beauties of the scene as anything could be. It is a mass of wretched and foul-smelling ruins, covered everywhere with nettles and weeds and filth. It is the very ideal of dilapidation and desolation, for even the natives of the place are obliged to vacate their dirty dwellings in summer and live in booths lifted on poles above the roofs. It is hard to realize that here once stood a city as gay and as profligate as modern Paris.

Back of the town, in an almost impenetrable mass of rubbish and vegetation, is the famous fountain, a king of waters. The fountain-head is choked with a tumbled mass of debris ; the falling cliff and the violence of the mountain torrents have heaped their decaying rubbish on the massive walls and arches that once adorned this spot sacred to Pan and the still more ambiguous divinities of the fashionable Roman world. Almost every association of the place, ancient and modern, would force one to believe that the human race was bent upon defiling one of the loveliest spots God ever made. Naught but its waters remain pure.

Some parties camp close to the fountain in a

mass of fig trees and rough stone walls, which furnish ample protection to the sneak thieves who prowl about the tents and give many travellers occasion to recall their losses at this place of evil repute. We preferred to pass through the village, cross the old Roman bridge, and camp upon a shelf-like space beyond, with the river in front and a clear space all around, which could be more easily guarded at night. We took good care also to wake the echoes with our rifles and give fair notice that prowling at night would be attended with real danger. The people of Banias are all Moslems of a low type and have a deservedly evil reputation. They keep the shrine of Sheikh Khudr (Saint George) whitewashed outside, and they cover branches of a huge tree near the bridge with thousands of filthy rags as votive offerings, but that seems to be the extent of their religious life. They still maintain in the town a "Manzul" or public guest-house, one of a type now exceedingly rare in western Palestine. It is a large khan, with many rooms for man and beast. The wayfarer may here obtain bread and cooked food, with a rough covering for the night, free of cost. Its greatest virtue is in the fact that a stranger may be tolerably safe provided he escapes the attentions of the people before he arrives at the "Manzul." It is under the care of the family of the Hajj Ismail el Arkawy, who enjoy the feudal privilege of a yearly levy on the lands and crops of the town. There is no yearly audit of the accounts and it is safe to say

that the "Manzul" is not a dead loss to its hereditary managers.

We reached Banias on Saturday afternoon, and after selecting our camping place and lightening our saddlebags, we climbed the steep slope north of the town to the ruins of the huge castle of Subeibeh. It is twelve hundred feet above the town, and crowns a narrow spur of Hermon with one of the largest masses of ruins in all Syria. It is over three hundred and thirty yards from end to end, with widths varying as the rocky summit contracts or expands. On the north side is a dizzy precipice reaching down into a deep side valley. The masses of masonry built up toward the south are cyclopean in their construction. The panoramic view southward, and eastward of the Jordan Valley over the Jaulan, with the Safed Mountain in the west, is one of the fine views of Syria. We watched the sunset from these ruined battlements and recalled the checkered history of this commanding fortress, grimly guarding the valley and pass above it, from the days of the Maccabees until the last Crusader slept the sleep of death, and the banner of the Crescent waved over every Crusading stronghold in Syria.

Sunday our camp remained in Banias. The missionary member of the party rode away to the village of Ain-Kunyah and preached to the little Protestant congregation living there, and returned in the early afternoon. Having heard of the death of one Ibrahim Sellûm, father-in-law of the Emir

Mohammed el Faour, the head of all the Arabs of the Jaulan, we rode for an hour or more along the edge of the ravine down which the Banias water flows, past ruins ancient and modern, until we came to the white tomb of Sayyid Hada ibn Yakub. Here were gathered a hundred horsemen from the Jaulan above and several hundreds of the black frizzled Bedawin Arabs of the Huleh. They were ranged around the freshly dug grave. The body had been placed in it and covered with a thick covering of coarse green grass.

We took our place as mourners beside the Emir and his son and watched the men fill the grave again, lifting the earth with their hands. Several sheikhs meanwhile droned some dirges in Arabic. When the grave was filled and a row of stones placed around it the sheikhs arose and one of them began an invocation to the angels of death, Munkar and Nakir, who are supposed to take charge of the newly buried Moslem. They prayed God to be with the dead man when examined by these emissaries and to enable him to answer as a good Moslem should. Then after a few moments of silence the Emir looked around over the throng of men and said, "Forgive him!—do you all forgive him?" They answered in chorus, "We do forgive him?" Then again he raised his voice, "Do you all bear witness that he was a good Moslem, that he wronged no one, that he was kind and forgiving, that he bore enmity against no one?" Again they all answered, some in one word, some in another.

but all to the same intent. And this testimony was evidently given that the two angels now guarding the dead man might hear it and bear it in mind, when the day came for them to examine him.

Then they exchanged their salaams, — "May God recompense you (in this sorrow) by your own safety and peace," "May God preserve you," and withdrawing from the place to a grassy slope not far away, they ranged themselves in lines with faces toward the south and went through their service of Moslem prayer.

Among the stories which link the ancient Cæsarea Philippi with the modern Banias none is more characteristic than the revival of its ancient bishopric. Twenty-five years ago Butrus Jurajeery was a priest in Zahleh. One day he had a rather fierce doctrinal argument with the Protestant bookstore-keeper there and clinched his side of the argument by attempting to box the man's ears and put him down physically. Mr. Dale carried the matter at once before Rustem Pasha, then Governor-General of Lebanon, with the result that Rustem Pasha immediately banished the priest and his opponent from Lebanon. Thereupon Jurajeery went to France, and telling how the Protestant schools were filling the country, he raised money to support another set of schools under Roman Catholic direction. After a number of years he came back and worked hard and successfully in organizing and improving all these schools. He

made journey after journey to Europe in the interests of his work until 1890, when he conceived a new scheme which was interesting in many ways. It was nothing less than a plan to revive the ancient bishopric of Banias. He went to France, then to Italy and appeared before the Pope, where his plea was a telling one. "Why was it that the most ancient of all bishoprics, the very spot where the famous 'rock verse' (Matt. xvi., 18) was uttered by Christ to Peter, should lie in ruins and forgetfulness? and here was a second Peter (Butrus-Peter) who would undertake to restore its ancient glory!" The result was that he was made Bishop of Banias and "the faithful" in Europe sent him back laden with gifts to accomplish this novel and interesting mission. Because there was not a single Christian dwelling in modern Banias and no easy way of purchasing property he made Jedeideh the seat of the bishopric and reared a fine large church and dwelling there. He then attempted to purchase Tell el Kady, the supposed site of ancient Dan, for an orphan agricultural school, but even after many preliminaries had been agreed upon he was forced to give up the location and build his orphanage just above the Merj Aiyun and not far from Jedeideh. This latter location is a much more salubrious one than Tell el Kady ever could have been and the large structure with its galvanized roof and American windmill near-by is a worthy tribute to the energy and ability of this man. After being Bishop of

Banias for some ten years he was chosen "Patriarch of Antioch and all the East." Here again he showed his strength of character in securing the Patriarchate even though opposed by the Papal Nuncio, the Jesuits, and the Turkish government. He worked hard to reform many abuses among the bishops and the priests and died in 1902, greatly lamented by all the people of Syria.

This was our first Sabbath in camp and one that will long be remembered, for whether we sat by the rushing stream, or watched the gushing fountain, or thought of the lambs and their shepherd, or stood by the open grave of the Bedawin chief, over all and about all was another Presence which in the retrospect overmastered them all. For into this sheltered nook came our Saviour, a fugitive from the hostile Jews. Somewhere down among the oaks He heard that welcome confession for which He had taught and toiled and waited: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and upon the wooded height over against the great frowning castle of Subeibeh occurred the Transfiguration, and here under the quiet stars He made that final momentous resolution to return, to face the Jews, and "to meet the death which lay ready for Him, in their hate." From this farthest corner of the land Jesus set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. The plain below, the wooded glade, the winding stream, the fountain, the peaks above, the bright sunshine, and even the silent stars at night seemed hallowed by the struggle and anguish

of that Great Soul as He turned finally from the rest and sympathy of his followers and started upon that last awful plunge into the Valley of the Cross where He breathed out His earthly life in obedience to the Father's will.

CHAPTER V

THE JAULAN

MOST travellers from Banias to Galilee or the reverse swing around west of the Huleh and camp at Ain Mellaha. This is the well beaten road. We preferred for many reasons to climb the slopes east of the Huleh and spend a day or two in the Jaulan, entering Galilee by Jisr Benat Yakub. This route is not to be recommended except when accompanied by a good guide who must know not only the country (for here the roads are cattle tracks), but also the marauding inhabitants, who are notorious horse thieves.

Being a sort of border-land, where the Arabs Druzes, Circassians, and Turcomans contend with each other, it is almost hopeless to recover losses of any kind, so those who journey into this region must keep their eyes wide open by night as well as by day.

Monday we crossed the ruined bridge at Banias and entered the Jaulan, a section of country whose name has never changed since the days of Moses. In Deut. iv., 43, it is Golan; in the days of Joshua it was Golan; in Josephus it is the same; the

Romans called it Gaulanitis, and for more than a thousand years it has been what it is to-day, the Jaulan. The pronunciation has differed in different ages and languages but the individual sounds have remained the same.

When the Promised Land was divided, it fell to the half tribe of Manasseh ; its chief city, Golan,[1] was a Levitical city in the days of the Jewish monarchy and the prophets (1 Chron. vi., 71) ; it was Christian for nearly four hundred years (248–634 A.D.), until the Byzantines suffered their last crushing defeat at the Yarmuk in 634 A.D. For twelve hundred years, it has been in the hands of the Arabs except for the short period when the Crusading banners floated on the castles in the region of Banias.

Even in the time of the Crusaders, the country had fallen into decay, and for four hundred years it has been the favorite abiding place of the nomadic Bedawin tribes, who have had no interest in the preservation of the ancient monuments, or the guarding of firmly established abodes. Some ten or fifteen Bedawin tribes[2] claim portions of the land, and the Druzes also claim other parts. The Circassians have settled in a dozen villages round about Kuneitereh ; and the Jews have bought a small portion of the lands and a large share of the never-ending disputes about Sahem et Jaulan, the result being that there is a never-ending chapter

[1] The present Sahem et Jaulan.

[2] Five or six dwell there always, the others claim and exercise the right to winter there. Population, 19,500 settled (of whom only 5750 are able to write).— *The Jaulan*, Schumacher, London, 1889, p. 61.

of pillage, robbery, murder, and bloodshed which now and then, as in 1898, flames out into something resembling civil war.

The Jaulan is a most clearly defined territory of about five hundred and sixty square miles; Hermon and Wady el Ajam form its northern boundary. Nahr er Rukkad and the Hauran plateau close in the east; southeast and south flows the Rukkad in an ever-deepening ravine, which east of the Sea of Galilee is called the Yarmuk, and which drops into the Jordan some six hundred and fifty-six feet below the level of the Mediterranean.

The slopes bordering on the Jordan Valley, with the Huleh and the Sea of Galilee, form the clearly defined western boundary. The northern and middle parts are high and stony, while the southern is smoother and more adapted to cultivation. The difference in elevation between the highlands at Mejdel (4460 +) and the Ghor at the mouth of the Yarmuk (— 656) is over fifty-one hundred feet. The whole country resembles a huge turtle back, with the western edge some two hundred feet lower than the eastern.

It is the richest grazing country in all Syria. The spring pasturage reaches the height of a man, completely obliterating the roads. The soil is volcanic and the surface of the ground strewn with blocks of basalt from among which spring the succulent grasses, affording the richest fodder to the Bedawin flocks, all winter long, and late into the draught of summer. Add to this the existence of

hundreds of perennial brooks, and it is not hard to understand why such a stretch of country has been, and must continue to be, a source of great contention among its nomadic inhabitants.

Our route led us diagonally along the north-western slope, in full sight of the Huleh, until our barometers registered twenty-one hundred feet, and then all day along the rolling highlands,[1] just clearing the ends of the fissures which break downwards into the Jordan Valley. The air was clear and bracing, and the views of Palestine, west of the Jordan, superb. We could not but wonder why travellers, with a little extra expense for guides and guards, should not more often take this cool, breezy route, rather than the muddy, marshy, malarial route via Ain Mellaha and the plain of the Huleh.

We expected to find game, but the ploughman had been crowding close behind the shepherds and driving the flocks away, and with the cattle and herds have gone the gazelles of former days, so that all day long, a shot or two at partridges and wild pigeons was all that rewarded the straining of our eyes.

When we crossed the bridge at Banias we stepped from the limestone to the volcanic rocks, and all day long we were in full view of the group of extinct volcanoes about Kuneitereh, rising in Tell Abu en Neda to 4124 feet, and extending southward for about twenty miles, and we tried to imagine the

[1] Our route was as follows: Ain Fet, Gubt el Mais, Tell ez Zatir, Suwany, Guwat, Hawwa, Rawy, Hafr, Ulleka.

heaving agonies of the solid earth when these subterranean fires were raging.

Their summits and broken rims are now all covered with luxuriant vegetation and are ploughed in some instances to the very top. It is hard to imagine these grassy craters again turning into lakes of liquid fire.

We pitched our tents at Ulleka on a bit of green sward among the lava boulders. This is a village belonging to the Turcomans who share the pasture ground of the country with the Bedawin. They are supposed to have migrated hither more than a hundred years ago from some place in Southern Russia.

The village is made up of a number of rudest possible stone buildings, windowless, with low oaken doors, usually cut in one piece from the trunk of a tree, and a number of Turcoman tents. These shelters differ from all other tents in Syria in having no centre pole and no ropes. Five or six huge ribs, shaped like wagon bows, are stuck firmly into the ground, sometimes crossing each other, thus making a round tent, but more often the ribs are placed parallel to each other, forming an oval tent. A screen or wall of papyrus, about three feet high, is planted like a picket all around the bows with an opening left for the door. The black hair covering is then thrown over the bows and tied firmly down to them and the papyrus picket, making a much more serviceable abode in wind and rain than the Bedawin tent, but not nearly so pleasant or comfortable in warm weather.

These Turcomans own immense flocks of sheep and goats, from whose fleeces they manufacture carpets, and weave narrow girdles or belts which are used all over Syria. While exploring the village we saw some women spinning and weaving with about as primitive implements as one could find on this earth. They sat on the manure heap, one with a distaff spinning the natural wool by hand ; another was seated nearby with a rude warp tied to two pins driven into the ground ; a bunch of leather cards about three inches square, a ball of yarn, and a paddle. The pins held the warp ; the cards by being revolved crossed the threads, the ball of yarn was passed back and forth by hand, and the wooden paddle, with an edge like a knife blade, drove the yarn closely home in the woof. After half an hour's negotiations we succeeded in gaining possession of the whole loom and walked away with it in our pockets.

These people had neither eggs nor milk to sell us but they treated us politely in every respect. The old white mare of our guide, Abu Khalil, strayed away during the night and the cry was raised "horse stolen," but after a few minutes she was found and there is no reason to believe that we had been molested. In the morning Abu Khalil bade us good-bye and returned to his village of Ain Kunyat above Banias.

From our camp at Ulleka (1750 feet) to Jisr Benat Yakub (87 feet) we followed the general route of an old Roman road, the famous Via Maris

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of the Middle Ages, and one of the great routes of antiquity between Damascus and the sea, or rather between the Euphrates and Egypt. Here and there are patches of the ancient pavement, large blocks of basalt fitted closely to each other, set deep and fast in masonry, and worn smooth by the traffic of ages. These roads were built in such a way as almost to defy the lapse of time, but the hand of the modern ploughman, when he wishes to fence off the fields or build a rude house, makes short work of these monuments of antiquity.

As we travelled along this volcanic surface, stretching away to the eastward with a gradual increase in its surface level in that direction, it became evident that the flow had nearly reached its end as it came to the edge of the plateau, and when we found isolated islands of limestone around which this fluid mass had passed, this impression was strengthened. When we descended the slope to Jisr Benat Yakub and found that we had reached the limestone again, at no great distance from the top, the idea was apparently confirmed.

The remoteness of the volcanoes would lead us to believe that the frequent earthquakes in this region may be due quite as much to the settling down of great masses of limestone, which had been in a state of unstable equilibrium, as to a recurrence of volcanic rumblings. Such earthquakes are quite common in limestone regions, and are in all probability due to the undermining action of water which has already been referred to above.

GALILEE

"Each gentle dove and sighing bough,
That makes the eve so blest to me,
Has something far diviner now,
It bears me back to Galilee.

"Each flowery glen and mossy dell,
Where happy birds in song agree,
Thro' sunny noon the praises tell,
Of sights and sounds in Galilee.

"And when I read the thrilling lore,
Of Him who walked upon the sea,
I long, oh, how I long once more,
To follow Him in Galilee.

"O Galilee: Sweet Galilee;
Where Jesus loved so much to be,
O Galilee: Sweet Galilee;
Come sing thy song again to me."

CHAPTER VI

GALILEE

JISR Benat Yakub — the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters — was for us the gateway into Galilee, as it has been the gateway for many others during at least five hundred years. The present bridge of three stone arches, built of basalt blocks, has stood that length of time and might well last for a thousand years to come. Prior to the building of the bridge this spot was a famous ford from time immemorial. The Jordan here is thirty yards wide, and in February is a strong and swiftly flowing river that would have been dangerous for our heavily laden animals. Extensive ruins at the bridge, and below it, easily confirm the importance of the crossing in mediæval history. Just here the Crusaders, under Baldwin III., were surprised and defeated by Nureddin. This led to the building of a castle, which was held for a time by the Templars, but stormed and taken by Saladin. Part of Napoleon's army visited this spot in 1799. The Turkish government has a large guard-house on the west bank, commanding the bridge, which is still one of the most important points

strategically in all the region. The bridge is free to foot-passengers and horsemen, but loaded animals pay heavily. Some Jews from Safed buy the privilege from the government of collecting tolls, and with the connivance of the hungry soldiers forming the guard, seem to charge about what they please. There is no official notice of rates posted, and after much haggling our five mules were each taxed four piastres in gold, or nearly one dollar for the lot, for the privilege of crossing. While we were taking our lunch upon a grassy spot on the western bank of the river, we were near enough to see and hear what was going on in this novel "custom-house." Two parties were stopped by the officials, and resented the imputation that they had anything taxable; language was used in quantity and quality unsurpassed, and finally, when blows had done their perfect work, the victims were in a condition both physically and mentally to meet all the exactions of their persecutors. When they had gone on their way, not rejoicing as we judged from some expressions they used, the chief conspirator said in a loud tone of voice, intended to impress us with his vigilance in the protection of the boundary, "How were we to know that they had not stolen the mules!" We were impressed, but doubted whether anything but his capacious pocket had been benefited. Shortly afterwards an old, comparatively feeble woman, with three miserable little donkeys, came staggering down to the bridge. They were stopped, up-

117 BRIDGE OF JACOB'S DAUGHTERS—JISR BENAT YAKUB

braided, and maltreated. The packs were undone and their contents strewn about. After the poor creature had been mulcted of the few pennies she probably possessed, she was allowed to collect her scattered belongings, repack the donkeys, and go on her way in tears; while the officials justified themselves by calling heaven to witness that they thought she was smuggling tobacco. We were impressed again by the beautiful working of this system "for revenue only."

Just above the bridge is one of those strange sights in this topsy-turvy land, linking the present with the most remote past. Jacob is said to have once crossed the Jordan here (Gen. xxxii., 10), and here the modern Jews have founded one of their seven colonies in Galilee. The main street of the colony lies east and west. It is broad and lined with trees, while on either side are some thirty or forty well-built houses with tile roofs. Each house is located by itself in a well-kept garden, and the little outhouses and stables, fruit trees and vegetables, all so neat and clean, form a veritable oasis in the desolate landscape. Another of these colonies lies well out in the centre of the Waters of Merom and reminds one of Venice, when the lake is calm. Another colony was started at Sahem et Jaulan, the ancient Golan and city of refuge, but the title to the purchase was defective, and the jealous Moslems of the region encouraged the Bedawin to raid the colony a few years ago, which they did with a will.

The rows of neat cottages are now standing empty, the wire fences torn down and twisted into rusty heaps, the fruit trees broken off at the roots, and the whole scene one of pitiful devastation. The Jews fled to Damascus and to the other colonies for protection, and the matter has been in the courts ever since.

Two hours beyond Jisr Benat Yakub is Jaouneh, the largest and most prosperous of all the colonies. It is built well up on the side of the Safed Mountain and carries one in imagination to Switzerland. The main street is wide and sloping, the tile roofed houses rise in tiers, the gardens and vineyards are well kept, and the fruit orchards are in fine condition. The farming lands extend down into the plain for a mile or more, all divided symmetrically by wire fencing and rows of eucalyptus trees. Well-kept carriage roads and wagon tracks wind in and out among the trees, making the whole scene one of great beauty. Thousands of almond trees have been started and great orchards of olives. At one of the cross roads stands a grist-mill where a gasoline engine puffs away at its task through the hours of the day and night. There are many stories and much discussion about the unwise policy and mismanagement of these colonies, but the fact remains that in the face of great opposition from the Moslems and from the Turkish government, they have turned portions of the land into beautiful gardens and demonstrated the possibility of redeeming what seemed doomed to desolation.

121 JAOUNEH

According to Josephus, Galilee had two hundred and four towns and villages in the time of Christ. This would make the population very dense, a fact corroborated by the ruins, as well as by the existing villages in the land.

During this day we sighted three gazelles, started two hares and a pheasant, and bagged several partridges and wild pigeons. It was afternoon when we passed the Khan Yusef and, rounding a rocky shoulder, looked down into the beautiful harp-shaped lake of Galilee, whose waters, two thousand feet below, glistened in the emerald setting of the mountains which girdle it. Nothing in all Syria can compare for a moment with the quiet beauties of this inland sea. No pen or pencil can ever do it justice.

Other open sea views have half a horizon of solid earth and another half of boundless sea, often melting into the heavens, almost untraceable to the human eye. But Galilee is like a crystal, girdled by a ring of mountains, its iridescent waters below vying with the luminous atmosphere above to enchant the beholder at every season.

Viewed at sunrise, its depth below the lines of light excites a weird and silent mystery that is indescribable, except to the one who has seen it and exclaimed, "O Galilee!" Seen in the splendor of the Syrian sunshine at noonday, when some light breeze ruffles half its surface, one side is a spotless sheen of polished steel and the other a dazzling carpet of glittering jewels. And when the

sun is low in the West, and the winds have all fallen asleep, the color changes, and the hills and cliffs beyond are reflected so wonderfully in the lake below that one can hardly say which is the real and which is the shadow. Its waters seem forever to watch the sky, counting it their highest joy to interpret to us dull creatures, whose faces are too rarely lifted upward, the never-ending beauties of the heavens from dawn till midnight. Light, fleecy clouds seem to float through its silent depths. Great billowy masses of white clouds look like banks of eternal snow beneath the solid earth. When the storm clouds lower and the heavens grow dark, its waters become inky-black and the belated mariner on its troubled face shrinks from the tempest which lowers above the mountain tops, but he cannot shut out the storm which rumbles at him from below his trembling craft. His faith fails, his arm weakens, and everything earthly and stable seems slipping from his grasp. But he who has seen the sunshine burst through a rift in the storm clouds, lighting the face of Galilee, making the wind and the wave sink swiftly to rest, has seen the heavens open and caught sight of a vision that will never fade from his memory.

It seems no longer strange that God who loves beauty in everything He has created should have chosen this matchless spot as the home of that matchless Person in whom earth and heaven are forever linked; in whom the human and the Divine, the shadow and the real, the temporal

125 Camp at Tiberias

and the eternal melt harmoniously together, as the sea and the mountains and sky melt in the lake. The Galilean scenes in Christ's life are the quieter, happier scenes of His earthly existence. Here is where He chose and taught and trained His disciples,—he who would follow the earthly footsteps of our Master must often visit the Lake of Galilee.

We pitched our tents at Tabigha and spent the evening in the German Catholic Hospice. The Director, Zephyrin Biever, a splendid big man with a patriarchal beard, entertained us hospitably. He speaks English well, having lived for a time in Texas. His Arabic name is "Khuri Daud," and he has lived here eleven years and six years in Madeba, beyond the Jordan, whither we were travelling. He gave us letters to a French priest and much information that was of value to us. This Hospice is the property of a German Colonization Society, whose aim is not to send out German colonists, but to secure lands and invite the oppressed and poor of the country to occupy the lands and enjoy their more powerful protection. The Society owns a large tract running from the shore of the lake back up the slope for several miles.

During the night a large fishing-boat from Tiberias pulled up below our tents. After some negotiation we arranged for a sail in the early morning on the lake. So, striking camp the next day, we sent our caravan around by the shore to Tiberias, said good-bye to our good German friend,

and entered the boat with our guns and cameras. There were three boatmen, sturdy fellows who rowed us diagonally across the northern end of the lake to where the Jordan enters it. Some photographs of the shores were taken as we passed and both of us fired many shots at the "divers," who mocked at our efforts to reach them with lead, before they popped below the surface. We secured a number of duck and a large white waterfowl which now stands stuffed in the hotel at Tiberias.

Before we reached the river's mouth, we saw a file of some fifteen Bedawy horsemen take a ford that one could hardly have believed possible. The river itself at its outlet was not over fifty yards wide, but too deep to cross. So these horsemen entered the lake one hundred yards west of the river, and slowly circled out into the lake, following a sand-bar known to them, until the waters rose over the backs of the smaller horses. Still they kept their seats and still the horses kept their feet, completing the surprisingly wide semicircle, with a radius of not less than two hundred yards, and in the course of ten minutes were on land again, east of the Jordan. One hears of such fords, but few people know them, and fewer still are willing to try them.

Within the mouth of the Jordan, we found several fishing-boats at rest on the shingle. Their owners were all on the eastern bank, sorting and cleaning the catch of the night. This identical

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Drying Nets

GALILEE FISHERMEN

Roasting Fish on a Fire of Coals

Fishermen's Boats

spot has been used for the same purpose from time immemorial. Curiously enough the present owner of the government privilege to catch fish in the lake is a Jew, and the man engaged in cleaning the fish is also a Jew, but all the fishermen and owners of the boats are Moslems. By a rare coincidence, we found eight or ten of the hungry fishermen gathered round a fire, on which they were roasting fish, a repetition of the scene described in John xxi., 9. This photograph is unique among the many we were able to obtain. The Jewish overseer stands on the left with his hand on his mouth, the fishermen kindly moved back while we photographed, so that we could see the eight or ten fish which lie roasting on the oval iron plate, under which is the "fire of coals."

The low-lying plain east of the Jordan at this point is called the Batiha and is one of the richest plains in Syria. At one point it is four miles broad. It is now owned by Muhammad Said Pasha of Damascus, the famous leader of the Mecca pilgrimage, who rules the region with almost unlimited power. Arabs till the ground in a primitive way, but the soil and the climate are such that they easily reap three abundant harvests yearly. The first corn harvest follows the winter rains. The waters of the Jordan are then used to irrigate a second crop of Indian corn, and when that is gathered they plant vegetables and watermelons. Herds of buffalo cows pasture here all the year round. Palm trees, wild figs, and pomegranates abound.

The temperature is a scorching one, and with a south wind becomes almost unbearable. The marshes breed fevers, which render the inhabitants one of the weakest and most worthless strains in all Syria.

After an hour or two among the fishermen and the herdsmen we re-entered the boat, and for two hours glided under sail over the blue waters to Tiberias. The town lies fairly on the water's edge, and has a forbidding aspect because it is built of black basalt. We found our camp pitched north of the town, near the ruined citadel and on a bluff some one hundred and fifty feet above the lake. At Tabigha we saw one specimen — the "Khuri Daud"—of the modern disciple, a hale, good-natured monk. Here at Tiberias we saw another disciple, — a sturdy, clear-eyed Scotchman, Dr. Torrance, who, with his assistants, practises the modern art of healing and relieving pain in the name of Galilee's Master. Men and women of all creeds, ancient and modern, come many a day's journey from far beyond the Jordan to this haven by the sea. All are welcome, all are cared for kindly. Many are healed and relieved of burdens which were making life miserable or intolerable. When they return to the poverty and desolation of their nomadic dwellings, they look back to this bright Christian hospital as the very door and gateway to heaven itself. Dr. Torrance and his workers remain eight and nine months in this seething climate, and flee away to Safed for a breathing spell

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in the summer. The massive walls of the various buildings, the small windows and stone roofs, are an attempt to shut out the fierce heat and glare of the sun, and to afford a relief from the deadly influences of mere continued existence in this spot. But the little cemetery below, with its rows of graves,—wives and little children,—tells a pathetic story of the abundant sufferings and sorrows of those who follow the Master's footsteps in this lonely station by Galilee.

Eight months after our visit, cholera appeared in the villages around the Sea of Galilee. The good Doctor remained at his post, but his bonnie wife fell a victim to the scourge, and the little cemetery claimed another hostage until the resurrection morning.

"Among the rivers of the world, the Jordan is unique by a twofold distinction of Nature and History. There are hundreds of other streams larger, more useful, or more beautiful; there is no other which has been more spoken about by mankind. To half the world the short thin thread of the Jordan is the symbol of both great frontiers of the spirit's life on earth—the baptism through which it passes into God's church, and the waters of death which divide this pilgrim fellowship from the promised land.

There may be something on the face of another planet to match the Jordan Valley—there is nothing on this."

George Adam Smith.

CHAPTER VII

THE JORDAN

FROM Tiberias to the Hot Springs is a ride of twenty minutes along the shore of the lake, on a carriage road smoothed and repaired anew for the German Emperor, who failed to come to Galilee in 1898. Another hour and a half carried us and our caravan to the foot of the lake where the Jordan issues from it and begins its last strange descent towards the Dead Sea. A good ford exists here for the greater part of the year, leading into the town of Semakh, but at this season it was too deep for our loaded animals. People and animals of the region make use of a rude ferry, carrying the loads in a boat and swimming the animals, but neither our animals nor our muleteers were accustomed to this, and so we followed the river bank southward for another hour, to the ford at a village named El Abadiyeh = "the Everlasting." We passed the ruins of two ancient Roman bridges of many arches, which once joined the east and west banks.

Abadiyeh is a village of mud-brick houses, built on a conical mound, two thirds of its base being

washed by the whirling currents of the Jordan. In front of this village, and to the right of the road, we saw our first good specimen of a village "wood-saint." A couple of straggling trees mark the resting-place of some holy Moslem. The grave has made the trees sacred, has given them a new name, "Fakireh," *i. e.*, poor, and has rendered them safe from outrage for ages to come. No Moslem would dare to break off a twig or a leaf, nor remove any of the dead branches which litter the ground until they decay, and all this in a country where the lack of firewood is one of the greatest difficulties of everyday life. The grave of the holy man and the sacred trees convert the spot into a sort of sanctuary, or "safety deposit," and here the superstitious people bring firewood, roof-timbers, old doors and windows, agricultural implements, wooden measures, and household vessels for safe-keeping. They are safer here than they could possibly be under lock and key in their wretched homes, for no one, except the foreign traveller's cook, dares extend a trespassing hand to this treasure. So it comes to pass that these Moslem "wood-saints" are a much more useful fraternity in preserving the firewood for the community than certain other saints whose supposed powers save their devotees from the fires of another world.

The ford and the crossing at Abadiyeh will not soon be forgotten by our caravan. The river was fully seventy-five yards wide, and flowing with an exceedingly swift and strong current. It took half

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an hour to tighten the loads and lift them higher on the backs of the animals. Some Arabs ploughing near-by came and agreed for a consideration to show us exactly where the ford lay. Two of them hitched up their clothing, seized their long ox-goads, and led three of us into the stream. The first plunge was down a slippery bank into soft mud, which startled the animals unaccustomed to it; then we passed along the muddy bank down-stream with the current, for some twenty yards, until we reached a shingly bottom; then in a wide swing down-stream we made an arc of fully one hundred and fifty yards before we neared the other bank. The water was not anywhere over four feet deep, but the swift current, when once it reached the horses' stomachs, almost swept them from their feet and terrified them greatly. When once on the other side we dismounted and proceeded to encourage the others. The Arabs waded back and forth, bringing two loaded animals at a time. Our cook Butrus, seated high on his load, lost his head, looked at the swirling current, and was pointing down-stream, but we waked him in time with a pistol shot, and when he saw his danger he pulled his horse's head in the right direction. It took one and a half hours of exciting work to get our caravan safely over, and we were glad to pay the two Arabs enough to make them happy for a day or two.

We seated ourselves on the green sward, and looking across "to Canaan's fair and happy land,"

we tried to take in some of the wonderful strangeness of this stream, sacred to Jew, Ishmaelite, Moslem, and Christian. We had crossed two of its sources—the Hasbany and the Banias; we had seen the other two nearby. We had seen the head-waters lose themselves in the swamps and papyrus thickets above Merom. We had crossed the Upper Jordan at Jisr Benat Yakub, we had marked its entrance into the Sea of Galilee, and its outlet, and we were now seated about midway in its strange course.

From the farthest source of the Hasbany to the mouth of the Jordan is a distance of not more than one hundred and thirty-six miles in a straight line; we were seventy-three miles from the source, and sixty-three miles from the Dead Sea, and more than seven hundred feet lower than the surface of the Mediterranean. From the Hasbany source the stream falls nearly twelve hundred feet to the Huleh (Merom), whose surface is only seven feet above the Mediterranean. Then in the distance of nine miles only it drops six hundred and ninety feet into the Sea of Galilee; from Galilee it makes another descent of six hundred and ten feet, or about three thousand feet in all, from its source to its end in the Dead Sea. Above Galilee the course is nearly straight for nine miles, but below Galilee, while the distance in a straight line to the Dead Sea is only sixty-six miles, the river in its windings flows fully two hundred miles.

The meandering of the Jordan between this

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point and the Dead Sea is one of its very marked peculiarities, and points to a reduction in the velocity of its current as the cause of this condition of things. The difference in level between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea would give an average fall of nearly ten feet per mile, altogether too great a rate of descent to produce a meandering course, such a river formation being usually found in a flat region.

Among the subjects investigated at this point, in the effort to secure light upon the matter, was the relative surface levels of the valley. By the aid of a pocket level, which was quite sensitive, we were able to make out that the main surface to the south of us was higher by several feet than that near the outlet of the lake. This was tested by means of the barometers, with the same result, within the limits of about two miles, which represented our extreme wanderings north and south in the valley as we crossed it.

The whole of the surface as far as the eye could reach was a sedimentary deposit, presumably a lake deposit, where the surface would be approximately level, but the valley surface, while appearing level to the eye, has in all probability a slight inclination from the south to the north, if not throughout its entire length, at least through a considerable portion of it to the south of the Sea of Galilee.

We say, in all probability, for the reason that we had no means of verifying our results at a point farther down the valley and the range within which

they were obtained was too small and the change in elevation too slight to enable us to be positive about it.

The tributary rivers which enter this deposit have cut deep channels in it, until they enter the main stream. At first their courses, after leaving their own valleys in the eastern highlands, are very nearly straight, but they soon become subjected to the same influences as have been felt by the Jordan and begin to meander. All these facts seem to point to a slow elevation of the southern end of the valley. This only became apparent after reaching the end of our journey, when observations were made which offered a possible explanation, but it is noted here in its proper place and will be referred to later on. This fact would account for the inability of the people to utilize this land for any purpose but grazing, as it is all but impossible to irrigate it, except by diverting some southerly tributary stream from its course. As far as we had come the upper levels of the top of the eastern plateau were increasing in altitude and here at the bottom of the valley was an interesting accompaniment to that feature. We shall see that this gradual rise in altitude continued to be noticed throughout the whole length of our trip along this eastern plateau.

The gradual elevation of the southern end of the valley, by checking the velocity of the current of the stream, would force it to meander, because it would be diverted by slight obstacles. Still, how-

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ever, we have here a stream which is doing a very considerable amount of erosion, as shown by the depth of the water surface below the level of the surrounding country. Apparently nothing but the swiftness of its current keeps it in existence. The stream is anomalous in several ways. It should not meander with such a fall in its bed. It should not be such a rapid stream, and meander three times the distance of its straight course in the valley. There is a probability that the meandering character fixed the position of the channel of the stream, and since that time the process of erosion has been more rapid than the rate of elevation, because of the character of the soil. There are many interesting problems here for an "irrigation engineer," and furthermore, the well-developed stream terraces of the lateral tributaries are well worth investigation. These we did not have time to study. This may seem strange to any one not acquainted with the region. But the available camping places here are few and far between, and with a caravan such as ours, water was an almost imperative necessity. Consequently, having selected Gadara as our objective point, we found, after doing what we could, that we should have to push on rapidly to reach it before dark.

Upon the Lebanon our barometers measured four thousand feet, at Banias eleven hundred and fifty, at Jisr Benat Yakub they hovered near the zero of the scale, but on the way down the slopes to the Sea of Galilee the startled needles began a

downward plunge to regions never before visited by them, until at this middle point in the river they stood over seven hundred feet below the surface of the Mediterranean, or a total descent from Lebanon above of over forty-seven hundred feet. Later on in our trip, when we descended from our highest point on the Edom plateau, fifty-eight hundred feet above sea-level, to the Dead Sea, thirteen hundred feet below that level, the range within two days was seventy-one hundred feet.

Perhaps the strangest thing about this famous river is that none of the ancients ever guessed at this curious feature of the stream. They journeyed up and down the Jordan Valley since before the days of Abraham; they climbed down the roads from Jerusalem to Jericho and up into Moab and Edom; they built roads east and west of the Jordan, joining the seacoast and the desert, cutting the Jordan Valley at many points and angles; they built roads and bridges and cities at levels far below the surface of the Mediterranean, and yet never seem to have suspected that this stream differed from most of the rivers of the globe in this respect. Greeks, Romans, and Mohammedans, Jews, Christians, and Crusaders knew every nook and cranny of its winding course, but failed to realize that while its head and source rested high on noble Hermon's side, its mouth in the Dead Sea, unlike most other river endings, was far below the surface of the habitable world and all the surrounding oceans. It was not until March, 1837, that two Englishmen,

Moon and Beke, experimenting by means of boiling water, detected the strangeness of the great depression and attempted to measure its extent. Their means were so crude that they thought the Dead Sea about five hundred feet below the Mediterranean. Scott and Symonds came three years later and made it twelve hundred and thirty-one feet; then our American explorer, Lynch, in 1848 made it thirteen hundred and sixteen feet. It remained for the members of the English Palestine Expedition Survey to run a series of levels across the country, and in 1874 give us what is perhaps the most accurate measurement of all, twelve hundred and ninety-two feet below the Mediterranean. There are a few other parts of the earth's surface, uncovered by water, which sink below the level of the ocean, but none of them reach much beyond three hundred feet. "But here we have a rift more than one hundred and sixty miles long, and from two to fifteen broad, which falls from the sea-level, to as deep as twelve hundred and ninety-two feet below it, at the coast of the Dead Sea, while the bottom of the latter is thirteen hundred feet deeper.[1]

"In this trench there are the Jordan, a river nearly one hundred miles long; two great lakes respectively twelve and fifty-three miles in length; large tracts of arable country, especially about Gennesaret, Bethshan, and Jericho, regions which were once very populous, like the coasts of the Lake of Galilee; and the sites of some famous towns,

[1] G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 468.

Tiberias, Jericho, and the 'Cities of the Plain.' There may be something on the surface of another planet to match the Jordan Valley—there is nothing on this."

The place of the river Jordan in human history is as unique as are its features in nature. Among the Jews it was the emblem of "separation." Its passage marked the entrance of the Children of Israel into the Promised Land, after the wanderings in the wilderness, and the wars in Edom and Moab beyond the Jordan. Part of the tribes, two and a half, elected to dwell on the other side of its flood, and this in earliest times led to misunderstanding and bloodshed. The altar built upon its eastern banks availed for naught; habits, language, and religion came to differ to such an extent, that when the monarchy declined, and the distressed Jews fled over Jordan, their ancient kinsmen no longer knew them, and treated them with the greatest cruelty.

Bridges there were none, fords were few, and not passable at all seasons, so that the crossings of the Jordan, in Jewish history, rank with the battles. And so it remains to the present day. On the western bank is comparative safety, while just over the narrow stream is no man's land, where theft, bloodshed, and murder are the commonest every-day occurrence.

Strangely enough, in Christian centuries, while remaining the same emblem of "separation," it took on new meanings. Because it was the place of baptism of Christ Himself, and after Him of

countless thousands, it became the symbol of entrance to the new spiritual life. And thousands and tens of thousands of pilgrims, from distant Christian lands, toil down the barren slopes of Judea to bathe and wash away their sins in its sacred waters. Then to other thousands, in Protestant Christian lands, who rejected the pilgrimage to the Holy Land and its sacred sites, the crossing of the Jordan came to mark the entrance into the Promised Land, even Heaven. The Jewish river of "separation" became the Christian river of "death," and "passing over Jordan" meant, not the washing in the waters of baptism for repentance only, but the last great change in human history, when the disembodied soul steps over the narrow frontier and enters the life eternal.

The instincts of the human race, and the cravings of myriads of souls, made no mistake in centring about this unique feature of our planet. They guessed not at many things we have since learned, but it does seem as though they had felt more than they knew or could express. We have cleared up many mysteries, but have also widened the circle of our ignorance. At the same time we have by no means exhausted the imagery and power of that wonderful river. As the boundary of the new spiritual life at baptism, and the still more beautiful frontier of the eternal life beyond, it will live forever in history, in poetry, in art, and in song. But there is another beautiful sense in which it becomes a type of the river of life.

The Children of Israel, freed by the mercy of a covenant-keeping God, trained and disciplined by the miracles and tokens of God's special care, were led out of bondage into the wilderness, and an important part of that sad history was spent round the waters of the Dead Sea, and in the crossing of the lower Jordan. Moses, lifted up his voice as a preacher of righteousness and leader of men, but the multitudes too often turned a deaf ear, not infrequently threatened to stone him, and consequently they perished in the desert of their own lean souls.

Half-way up that sacred river, in the very central point of human history, stands another figure, greater than Moses, greater than Elijah, the living link between the Old Dispensation and the New, between the Jewish and the Christian, John the Baptist. His feet stand within the sacred stream, his hands lift its cooling, cleansing waters to the heated brow and sinful heart in the baptism of repentance, and his message is that of a kingdom coming that shall roll like Jordan, and spread like the waters in Ezekiel, for the healing of the nations.[1]

Then away at the sources of the sacred river, nearer the everlasting fountains, which gush from the heart of Hermon, whose snow-crowned head seems part of the heavens above, stands the matchless figure of "Christ, the Son of the living God." Here is no Dead Sea, hiding wrecks of monstrous iniquity, with its surrounding deserts of murmuring

[1] Ezekiel, xlvii.

and wandering, and its still darker background of Egyptian bondage. Nor are we any longer at the middle Jordan of human history, the water-gate of repentance, where a fiery Old Testament Prophet of repentance probes the devious wanderings of the human heart, in his attempt to wash it clean and make fit channels for the grace of God.

We have reached the fountain-head, the source of the river of God, where every type and figure and prophecy, the bondage, the wandering, the Dead Sea of human helplessness, the Jordan, the Promised Land, the tabernacle, the temple, prophet, priest, and king, fade in the presence of Him who was and is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life." At His feet still flows the Jordan of sacred memory, but His face and outstretched hand are toward the Mount of Transfiguration, and through the rifted heavens we hear snatches of angel music, and catch glimpses of a great white throne and a "river of water of life, clear as crystal," toward whose peaceful and restful banks our pilgrim feet are hastening.

The first crossing of the Jordan, and entrance into the Promised Land, was hard by the grave of the river in the Dead Sea. Moses, Elijah, and Christ all passed that way. The way of repentance, John's baptism, was higher up that stream but far below the level of the Mediterranean. The Sea of Galilee, too, with all its placid beauty, where the Jordan rests after its first great fall, is lower than most other depressions of the earth's surface.

Cæsarea Phillippi, the place of confession, is raised but a little above the sea line, the level of all human activities, but the Mount of Transfiguration pierces the heaven itself.

CHAPTER VIII

GADARA AND THE DECAPOLIS

CLIMBING the steep bank of the river for a hundred feet or more, we reached the plain between the Jordan and the Yarmuk, and went across its nearly level floor. It is a stretch of rich, deep soil, about four miles wide and fifteen miles long. An hour's ride brought us to the ford of the Yarmuk. This stream (which carries down more water than the Jordan), the gorge with its fantastic confusion of lava and limestone rocks, its sulphurous hot springs and rank tropical vegetation, are a grand field for the geologist and botanist. This valley marks the southern edge of the lava flow coming from the eastward. The stream has not confined itself strictly to the edge of the lava, but has cut it at various points, thereby adding to the picturesque character of the deep gorge. The sombre lava contrasting both in form and color with the lighter limestone, and the structure of each, helped in producing a very pleasing effect. No valley that we crossed produced quite the same impression, and we paused repeatedly to take in the charm of its varied features.

Practically unoccupied, it looked like a deserted Eden, and its beauties were enhanced by the brilliant sunlight which poured into it from the west, showing off its fine vegetation and architectural loveliness at their best.

Crossing the Yarmuk we entered the district of Ajlun, and for two and a half hours we climbed the eastern slope of the Jordan Valley. The road mounts by easy zigzag lines which cross the lava and limestone masses again and again, and at each turn reveal wider and more beautiful views of Galilee and the Jordan Valley. All the way up this slope we saw traces of the ancient Roman road, paved with blocks of basalt, leading to Gadara, one of the cities of the Decapolis. At the ford of the Jordan we set our barometers at zero, and when at last we reached the ruined city they registered nearly two thousand feet. To carry a chariot road up this bold headland, crowded on two sides with the deep clefts of the Jordan and the Hieromax (Yarmuk), over the crumbling limestone strata, and among the twisted folds of the adamantine basalt, and to overcome an elevation of two thousand feet within a distance of about eight miles, is a feat that seems to have delighted the Romans. To have laid those basalt blocks in such a manner as to defy the flight of two thousand years is an index to the iron-hearted purposes of the men who conceived and carried out such enterprises, while they were conquering the world.

Mkes, the modern representative of the ancient

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city of Gadara, stands on a headland pushing westward, twelve hundred and fifteen feet above the Mediterranean and nearly two thousand feet above the ford of the Jordan. The steep slopes on three sides, north, west, and south, easily explain why it was once such a formidable fortress. It is a mass of ruins more than two miles in circuit. Its main street runs nearly east and west and is about a mile long. The ancient Roman pavement, deeply furrowed by the iron chariot wheels, is still in position and still doing duty as a road. The bases of hundreds of pillars still remain *in situ*, showing that the street was once a beautiful colonnade. Towards the west there are an arch, a forum, and a temple ; and a bath and a mausoleum can still be distinguished among the ruins lying on each side of this main street. But the most imposing ruins are of two theatres, one facing the north, and one with a western exposure, both located against the highest spur of the headland. The upper tiers of the western theatre command a superb view of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, and of the Jordan Valley south of the sea.

We camped on what was once the stage of the north theatre, and found the finely built galleries leading to the exits used as storehouses for straw, and the lower dens as stables. Some fifteen or twenty families have occupied the ancient site, and have begun the work of vandals in building their wretched hovels among the ruins. Having given out word that we would purchase coins the people

came, young and old, and brought us coins by the hundreds. We began by paying one "metallique" (one cent) for legible ones of all kinds, but soon had to lower our price to half, and then to a quarter of a cent. The market was glutted. For every good specimen there were eight or ten others which had been ruined by fire, blackened and illegible, speaking eloquently of the fate of the once beautiful city, perhaps a thousand years ago.

On the eastern slopes beyond the city are hundreds of tombs cut into the limestones, but fitted with lintels and doors of black basalt. Many of these doors are still *in situ* and a few still turn upon the hinges. One striking feature is the existence of perhaps two hundred sarcophagi which have been dug up and stand about in the fields. To economize space, and waste no more than necessary of the fat soil beneath them, the people have acted upon the brilliant idea of standing them upon their ends, and it is a strange sight to see these coffins of antiquity, denied space enough to lie in, standing in the fields of waving grain.

The destruction of this city seems to date, like that of other trans-Jordanic cities, from the early years of Moslem conquest. The Byzantines met their awful defeat at the Yarmuk in 636, and it would seem that the city has been in ruins for over twelve hundred years, because there are no remains of Moslem or Saracenic buildings among the more ancient Roman structures. Prior to the Moslem conquest, in the third to the fifth centuries it was

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the seat of a Christian bishopric. In March, 68 A.D., it was captured by Vespasian, and its inhabitants at that time seem to have been mainly heathen, worshipping Zeus, Heracles, Astarte, and Athene. The name Gadara does not occur in the New Testament, but reference is made to the country of the Gadarenes (Matt. viii., 28, R. V.). The place belonged to Herod's dominion in the time of Augustus, and was one of the cities of the Decapolis (Matt. iv., 25; Mark v., 20, vii., 31).

The rediscovery and identification of these ancient sites east of the Jordan, since the days of Seetzen (1806) and Burckhardt (1810–12), has thrown much light upon the subject of the presence and extent of Grecian civilization in these more remote parts of Syria. Prof. G. A. Smith has summed up these results in his graphic chapter on Greece over Jordan, the Decapolis.[1]

Greek immigration flowed into Syria after the conquest of Alexander the Great. The Greek dynasties at Antioch and in Egypt further encouraged this immigration. The Greeks first absorbed the ancient Philistine and Phœnician cities, and then gradually extended beyond the Jordan, sometimes occupying the old sites, as at Hamath, Hums, and Damascus, and sometimes building *de novo*, as at Jerash and Hippos. In every case they transformed whatever they found and made the cities *Grecian* in every respect. When the Dynasties waned at Antioch and in Egypt, these civic

[1] *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 593.

communities assumed and exercised a large measure of independence. Threatened by enemies from the desert, and the clash of Maccabees and Romans west of the Jordan, they surrounded their cities with great walls, and added frowning fortresses to their more beautiful colonnades and theatres. Thus Philadelphia, Gadara, and Abila were all grown to be important fortresses by 218 B.C. When the Maccabees were in the ascendency east and west of the Jordan, they took away the freedom of these Greek cities, but when the Romans under Pompey came, their freedom was restored, and they came to date their civic eras from the year of Pompey's Syrian campaign, 64–63 B.C. The Romans extended their sway without despoiling or changing the life and worship of these cities. They established their control by repairing and rebuilding the great roads and extending them farther than ever before into the desert, east and south. Just how much independence the Romans granted these Grecian cities, it is difficult now to say, but it must have been a large measure. While the origin of the Decapolis is unknown, its existence confirms this semi-independent relation to Rome. Rome did not make her power effective up to the desert until about 106 A.D., and in this interval between 63 B.C. and 106 A.D. the Greek cities were allowed or required to take care of themselves.

The Decapolis was a league of Greek cities, formed to resist the various Semitic influences, east and west of the Jordan. Nominally or originally

ten, the number varied at different periods and at one time included at least eighteen large towns.[1] Of these cities, only one was west of the Jordan—that is Beisan, or Scythopolis. It stood as the guardian of the line of communication between Greece over Jordan to the seacoast. All the other cities of the league were on the great roads which started from Scythopolis and ended in fortresses or fortified towns far out in the Syrian Desert.

Scythopolis { Hippos–Damascus,
Gadara–Kanatha–Hauran,
Pella–Dion–Jerash–Philadelphia.

Just over Jordan stood three cities, on the three main roads. Hippos was the first city on the most direct route to Damascus.

Gadara was the guardian of the line extending through Abila, Kanatha, and far into the Hauran. Pella occupied the same position on the road to Dion, Jerash, and Philadelphia, and the other branch which led southward via Madeba, Kerak, and Petra, to India and Egypt.

One needs to see the ruins of these twenty Grecian cities and the remains of these magnificent roads, extending for hundreds of miles into the desert, to realize the power of the Grecian civilization and the dominion of Rome. Christianity made a splendid fight for these pagan cities, in the centuries after Christ, and seems to have succeeded

[1] According to Pliny, *H. N.*, v. (16), the original ten cities from which the Decapolis received its name were Scythopolis, Pella, Dion, Gerasa, and Philadelphia; Gadara, Raphana, and Kanatha; Hippos and Damascus.

much better in the south at Madeba and Kerak than in any city north of the Zerka. We know of martyrs in nearly all the cities of the Decapolis, and also that they faced the lions as bravely here as they did in the Colosseum at Rome.

Now the most interesting fact, from a historical and archæological point of view, concerning the cities of the Decapolis is that when they went down before the whirlwind of Mohammedan conquest in the seventh century, the invaders seem to have exterminated the inhabitants and swept northward and westward, leaving the wonderful and beautiful cities tenantless but undestroyed. The Arabs of the desert followed with their flocks and herds, and being dwellers in tents, left the cities to crumble through the lapse of time. Now and then an earthquake has hastened the overthrow of temple and colonnade and forum, but we have in many of the cities the most perfect illustration of a Grecian city that the modern world can ever hope to see. The ruins lie as they were left, a thousand or even twelve hundred years ago. This is the charm, this is the enchantment which has been alluring travellers for a hundred years, in spite of all the dangers from Bedawin tribes, and the still more jealous occupants of these ancient cities.

When we crossed the Jordan at Abadiyeh, it was our intention to return to Beisan (Scythopolis) via the Jisr el Majamia, but after we had viewed the ruins of Gadara, and sat in our tents reviewing the day, we decided to go at once to Jerash, seeing

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as many of the cities and as much of the country of the Decapolis as possible. Our experiences in the days that followed more than justified our change of plans.

The suggestion of George Adam Smith to identify Gadara with Ramoth-Gilead is not to be dismissed lightly. We have visited at least four of the proposed identifications (Salt, Ajlun, Gadara, and Irbid) and feel sure that none of them can match Gadara in the features which make it an almost impregnable watch-tower and fortress, commanding a wider sweep of country than almost any of the other proposed identifications.

Early the next morning we climbed to the roof of the Sheikh's house, occupying the highest point of the headland, and enjoyed the superb view in all directions, noting clearly many sites west of the Jordan, towards Beisan and Nablous, and tracing the general direction of our own road as it swung round the rim of the great amphitheatre of the mountains of Ajlun. On leaving the town we passed by the great burial-place, with thousands of rock-hewn tombs, and followed the course of the Roman road, which keeps due east along the ridge for over ten miles, until it reaches the main tableland at a ruin called Ain Harta. Here the great road forked, one branch swinging round the sources of the Yarmuk, and on to Damascus, while the other, which we followed, kept ascending toward the south.

During the first two hours, we marked at a

hundred points the ancient aqueduct, which supplied Gadara with water from a distance of over thirty miles. It follows the ridge along with the Roman road, crosses at least one valley, the Wady Zeide, on great arches still standing, and makes a wide circuit around the ravines at the head of the Yarmuk. It was supplied with water from fountains near Dilli, which lies north of Sheikh Miskeen. When in good repair the water was carried in black basalt pipes, about as large as six-inch drain-pipes. These pipes had a flange at one end, which was fitted into the bell of the next length, and all were laid in cement in a channel cut in the limestone. The pipes have nearly all disappeared but the channel is traceable for miles.

This day's ride of seven and a half hours was one of the most delightful days of our trip. The air was cool, the sunshine magnificent, and the views superb all day long. The road never leaves the backbone of the highest ridge in Ajlun, and kept ascending slowly all day. Our Gadara camp was twelve hundred and fifteen feet above the sea, and at night we were more than a thousand feet higher. Our route was via Ain Harta, Beit er Ras, and Irbid to el Husn Ajlun.

Four and a half hours' riding brought us to Beit er Ras, the Capitolias of the Roman period. An hour away we saw a huge arch standing out clear against the sky and, as we approached, gained clearer views of the great extent of the ruins which still remain. The Roman road makes a majestic

swing round behind the headland, and then passes into the mass of public buildings, whose wealth of columns, carved capitals, ornamental work, and massive walls speak eloquently of the ancient richness and influence of this incomparable site. This same great road, as it leaves the town on the east, is lined with ruins and buildings, and then with tombs for another half-mile. The modern name, Beit er Ras, "the House of the Head," is an exact translation of the ancient Latin name "Capitolias," and this city was at one time a member of the Decapolis.

Only half an hour beyond Beit er Ras lies Irbid, —an ancient mound, over a mile square, standing up clear on all sides in the midst of a splendid piece of farming country. A closer examination revealed the fact that the sides of the mound were in places supported by walls of huge rough boulders, older than Roman work, many of them ten to fifteen feet long. All around the base of this mound are great cisterns for catching and retaining rain water, which the modern dwellers are now engaged in cleaning out and making use of. Some of the cisterns are enormous in extent.

Irbid is without doubt the ancient Arbela. Like other sites it was abandoned for centuries, and used as a pasture ground by the nomadic Arabs. But in 1875 the Turkish government extended its sway into this region and made it the seat of a local governor. Now this ancient mound is capped by a government building, a small barrack,

and a telegraph station. The poles and wires run up one side of the mound, over the top, and down the other side, and are a visible sign of the dominion of a modern government. But what a contrast these shaky, rickety poles and swaying wires are to the adamantine lines of black basalt, which the Romans built into the backs and sides of the everlasting hills!

A brisk ride of two hours from Irbid carried us to our camping-place at el Husn = the fortress,— which to distinguish it from many other places of the same name is called el Husn Ajlun. It is another of those ancient sites where a city was built on a natural spur, which by walling and filling in became a large and shapely mound. Its supporting walls are also of rougher work than the Romans usually did. Around its base are great numbers of cisterns cut into the rock, which were filled by the debris of ages, and which the modern inhabitants are engaged in excavating. Having no need to entrench themselves on the top of the ancient mound, they have abandoned its summit, used its supporting walls as quarries, and have built among the cisterns, over which they engage in many a lawsuit and shed each other's blood. A man builds a house on a rocky spot. A neighbor builds near him and discovers the mouth of a cistern, and with great toil proceeds to clean it out. Very often it leads him directly under his neighbor's house, and when that man discovers a second opening somewhere in his own yard, it becomes a difficult question to decide

as to whom this ancient and valuable possession should belong.

As we were approaching the town, the discharge of guns warned us to proceed with caution. We found things in commotion and inquired the cause. Some wandering Arabs had been trying to steal cattle, and this aroused the ire of the inhabitants of the village to the fighting-point. They sallied valiantly forth in pursuit of the aggressors, and beat off the Arabs after firing some two hundred shots. Only one man was hurt, and he was hit on the elbow by a stone. It was the triumphal return of the victors which we had witnessed, and they were celebrating by firing off some more shots.

We enjoyed a little surprise at this place. While in the act of dismounting on the threshing-floors just at sunset, we were startled by the sound of a steam-whistle — shades of Minneapolis, in this ancient trans-Jordanic region! There, not two hundred yards away from our tents, was a small building, near a stagnant pool of water, in which a bustling little steam-engine was running a small grist-mill, and this shrill note from its whistle was a notice to its own self and master that it was about time to quit work for the day! On inquiry we found that its owner came with the engine and mill from the region of Jaffa, and that he was grinding about one hundred and fifty bushels of grain daily for people who came miles from as many as thirty or forty waterless villages.

We treated somebody else to a surprise, also,

which in its way was stranger than the grist-mill, and links el Husn Ajlun to St. Louis, Mo. Miss Grace Miller, in her hope of reaching the Bedawin Arabs, has made el Husn her home and centre, and has been living here for two years. We made our way over the manure heap of the village, among the dogs and cattle, to her door, which, of course, was shut and barred at eventide. We knocked loudly and when challenged from inside partially revealed our identity. Then a little trap was opened in the larger door, and when she saw two Americans, armed cap-a-pie, come crawling into her abode, it was her turn to hold up her hands, which she did in true Western fashion.

She was just getting settled in a new house, and was delighted to welcome American callers so soon. We carried her away to our tents for dinner, and afterward restored her safely to her household, having brightened at least one evening of February for her. Whatever one may feel as to the wisdom of such a young lady living alone amid such surroundings, one must admire the pluck, spirit, and devotion which can sustain her days and months of loneliness, often of weakness, in the face of such fearful odds.

We slept that night after reviewing the strange jumble of things, ancient and modern, which had crowded upon us during the day,—Grecian temples, theatres and forums; Roman roads, aqueducts and baths; ancient sites, mounds and reservoirs; telegraph wires and Turkish soldiers; a bustling steam-

engine with its whistle and whirring millstone, and then this young Christian worker from St. Louis.

The people of the region are just making the change from nomadic life to that of dwellers in cities. They are losing the strength and charm of the dwellers in tents, and gaining, all too rapidly, the vices, the squalor, and the weakness of the dwellers in the poorest towns. One cannot but wonder what will be found here fifty or a hundred years hence.

CHAPTER IX

JERASH

FROM El Husn to Jerash was a pleasant ride of six hours, among the rolling hills of Gilead. Instead of taking the direct road, via Suf, we struck almost due east, toward the great pilgrimage road to Mecca. The country round about comprises some of the finest farming lands in Syria, and after lying fallow for centuries, produces splendid crops of wheat. In an hour we had risen to twenty-six hundred feet (El Husn, 2200 feet) and a quarter of an hour later passed the village of Shittim. In forty minutes more we were at Namiah, and thirty-five minutes beyond that point passed a magnificent giant oak. Forty-five minutes later we were on the last ridge above Wady Warran, and in exactly four hours from El Husn we struck the Circassian wagon track in Wady Warran, and followed this all the way to Jerash. Wady Warran is a natural roadway leading from Mizerib southward, and the Circassians have chosen it for their wagon road between Mizerib and Jerash. It is a beautiful and fertile narrow valley, the floor of which is cultivated for miles, and the sides

179 View of Jerash from the South

of which were until recently covered with oak trees. Partridges abound at some places still. We lunched under a fine oak tree by the wayside, and at this point were not more than half an hour west of the great pilgrimage road. While here we met a native, and asking the distance to Jerash were informed that it was about three minutes away. We found that, as is usual with these people, he knew nothing of time, for it took us two and a half hours to reach Jerash. After luncheon we climbed the steep slope of Jebel Kafkaka (3300 feet), crossing its ridge in a notch, and began to wind down its southern slopes. The Circassian road has some very steep bits, and at places winds through lonely glens, but is everywhere very beautiful. As we neared Jerash, signs of Circassian industry appeared in the well-kept fields, cart-tracks along the side-hills, and ploughmen everywhere. Approaching Jerash from Suf, one has distant views of the ruined city, but by this Wady Warren road one sees nothing of it until he rounds the shoulder of the last mountain, and steps within the circle of its ruined wall. But for a pleasant, easy ride, we can heartily recommend this more eastern route from el Husn, even though there is not a drop of water to be found after leaving the foul cisterns at Namiah. By 3.30 P.M. we had ridden through the Circassian settlement, bathed our horses' feet in the limpid waters of the fountain, which issues from beneath a fine ancient wall, and were safe in camp. Our tents were pitched on the floor of an

ancient temple, fifty yards north of the fountain, and one of our tent-pins was a fine column, some twenty feet high and two and a half feet in diameter.

Jerash, or Gerasa, is a city of stupendous ruins, second only to Palmyra in size and importance and second only to Baalbec in beauty of architecture. In many respects it surpasses them both, and as a perfect specimen of an ancient Grecian city it has no equal. It is a typical Greek site. The river Jabbok (the Zerka) cuts the ridge of Mount Gilead with a deep cleft, piercing the edge of the Syrian desert. About twenty miles east of the Jordan a beautiful winding valley from the north comes down to join the deeper valley. Two hours north of the Jabbok, in this valley called ed Dair, on both sides of the rushing shallow brook, the cultured Greeks built this beautiful city. They chose a spot amid the encircling hills, where a high hill rose toward the east, from whose base issued a fine fountain and where the floor and bed of the main brook was some sixty feet below the level of the open spaces on either side. The city wall enclosed a rough triangle of three miles in circumference, climbing the hillsides, spanning the brook twice; the city gates, north, south, east, and west, guarded the roads which connected Gerasa with other Grecian cities. Within the city they reared in splendid architecture every structure that made life worth living to the Greek mind and heart—the colonnaded street, ending in the Forum, above

183 Camp at Jerash

which towered a beautiful temple and behind which stood a great theatre, the bath, stately tombs, a triumphal arch, and not far away the seat-encircled Naumachia where the sea-loving people watched the mimic warfare between bireme, trireme, and fire-ships, and where Neptune and all the other deities of the sea were welcomed with shouts. The views from temple and theatre over the matchless city and fertile country round about, fat with olive trees and rolling fields of grain, completed the beautiful setting of one of the loveliest sites of all the ancient world.

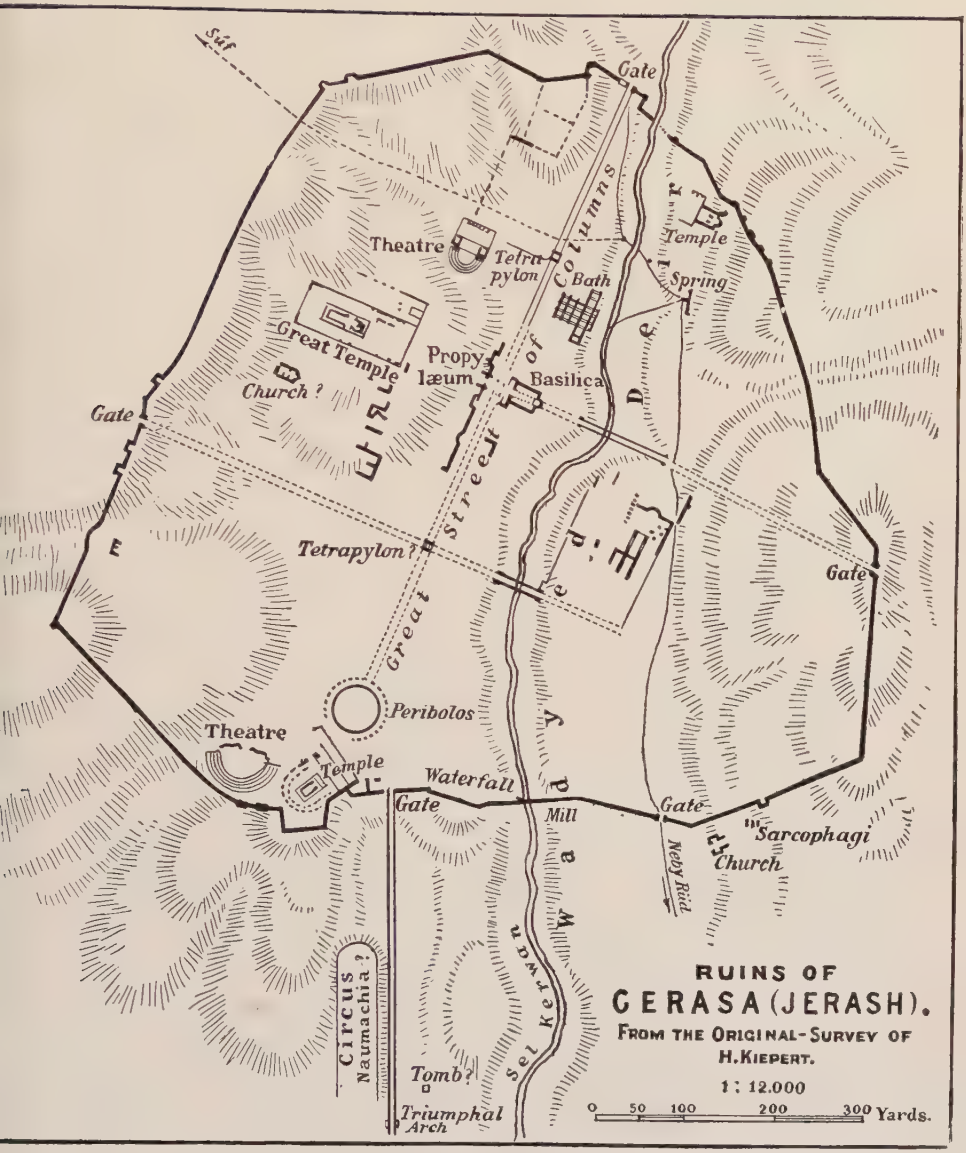
According to Pliny, Gerasa was one of the original ten cities which formed the Decapolis. All its known coins and inscriptions date from the Roman period, but the architecture of the Forum is Ionic of an early type. The city lay on the southernmost of the three great Roman roads leading out of Scythopolis and into the country east of the Jordan. The cities along this line were Pella, Dion, whose site is yet unknown, Gerasa, and Philadelphia. Its most prosperous period was early in the Christian era. Its finest buildings were erected as early as the second or third century. In the fourth century it was one of the largest and strongest towns in Arabia. It does not seem to correspond to any Old Testament site, and there are no traces of Christian occupation, if we except the traditions of Christian martyrs connected with the smaller of the two theatres. The Mohammedan occupation was a transient one, for they left almost no

remains. The Crusaders made a campaign against it, in trying to form an eastern frontier for the Holy Land. It was in the line of great fortresses — Belfort, Banias, Abila, Jerash, Rubud Ajlun, Kerak, Tafileh, Shobek, Gaza.

Exactly how or when the city was destroyed is not known. It most probably went down in the Mohammedan invasion and was left deserted for hundreds of years, because the state of the ruins after seven hundred years points clearly to the action of an earthquake and not the hand of man. An Arabian geographer, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, describes Gerasa as deserted. Hence we have here a Greek or Roman town standing as it was left seven hundred, if not twelve hundred years ago.

The plan of the city (facing) and the photographs will tell what the city is to-day. The ruined walls, a great dike-like line of cut stones, can be traced for nearly every foot of its circumference. Two or three of the ancient gateways are still intact, and almost all the space within the walls is a mass of ruins. The general view (p. 179) takes in a great wide sweep of the encircling mountains. The heap of ruins just visible above our tents (p. 183) marks the site of a fortress, built just within the northern gate. By this gate we will now enter the city and pass along the line of columns to the left of the tents.

As will be seen from the plan, the city was built on both sides of the brook and the main street ran nearly north and south. It was perfectly straight


Suf
Gate
Theatre
Tetra pylon
Columns of
Temple
Bath
Spring
Great Temple
Propy læum
Basilica
Church ?
Gate
Tetrapylon ?
Great Street of
Gate
Peribolos
Theatre
Temple
Waterfall
Gate
Mill
Gate
Sarcophagi
Church
Circus Naumachia ?
Tomb ?
Triumphal Arch
Sel Kerawan
RUINS OF
GERASA (JERASH).
FROM THE ORIGINAL-SURVEY OF
H. KIEPERT.
1 : 12.000
0 50 100 200 300 Yards.

189 Bridge at Jerash

for about one thousand yards. A gate formed the entrance from the north. This street was bordered by magnificent colonnades and ended in the Peribolos or Forum. In some places there was one row of columns on either side and for the greater part of the way, two rows. Where the cross streets cut this main artery of the city at right angles, there were elaborate buildings which seem to have covered part of the roadway.

At the Propylæum there must have been one of the most magnificent masses of architectural beauty ever reared in any land. It is perhaps not too much to say that almost every base of the thousand columns once lining this street is still in place, and that the ancient Roman pavement remains from end to end, concealed at many points by the debris. Some three hundred or four hundred columns are still standing, in whole or in part, a hundred sections of the architrave still span the spaces between the columns, and the rest are lying where they fell, perhaps a thousand years ago. Some of these standing columns are seen to the left of our tents and more in the picture marked "Columns No. 1 and No. 2." The first picture shows how the colonnades at the juncture of the cross streets were treated, while the third is of as imposing a specimen of ruin as exists in the city. The three detached columns show clearly the way in which the rocking action of the earthquakes chip the sections at the joints and make them ready for the final shake and overthrow, and also the way

in which the rocking motion displaced, but did not overthrow, the drums of which the columns were composed. Where the architrave still remains in place the columns have escaped this chipping process. In many places the joints between the drums are so well made as to conceal them when viewed from a short distance. A knife blade could not be thrust between the sections.

This ancient street, instead of ending in the south gate, terminated in a Forum or Peribolos, one hundred and twenty paces in diameter, around which are still standing fifty-eight of the ancient Ionic pillars, connected by their entablature. At several points the masses of ruins point either to a second and outer circle, or to other buildings connected by colonnades with the Peribolos.

High above the Peribolos or Forum, on a rocky knoll, supported and surrounded by a massive substructure, stands the ruin of a great temple, whose superb situation commands the whole town, and looks straight north along the colonnaded street. The walls of this temple are seven and a half feet thick. The inner cella was about seventy by fifty feet, and when surrounded by its rows of massive columns, must have been a superb sight, seen from every quarter of the city, and from every point of the colonnades. The photograph gives the present state of the ruin, showing the thickness of the walls and the single column standing near-by. The view of the Peribolos (p. 211) shows the great temple on the hill at the left in the background.

193 BATH AT JERASH

195 THE COLONNADE, JERASH

Just west of the forum temple, placed against the city wall, is the larger theatre, with its twenty-eight tiers of seats, its proscenium, its rows of columns, corridors and exits, that could seat five thousand spectators, and give most of them fine views of the whole city below, while commanding clear views of all within the theatre. This is undoubtedly the finest and best-preserved Grecian theatre in all the trans-Jordanic cities.

Just north of the centre of the town the main street was cut by one running at right angles. Toward the east it sloped downwards and crossed the brook on a massive arched bridge, which still stands, and can be seen in the photograph of the "Ancient Bridge." The juncture of the two streets was crowned by the Tetrapylæum, the most massive and impressive sight of the city. The main structure flanked the west side of the way. The colonnades became higher, the pillars more massive, and the substructure supporting the upper terraces were not less than sixty feet high. Columns, niches, arches, doorways, adorn this, but all were subsidiary to the superb gateway, the equal of which we have never seen elsewhere. It was approached by wide steps, up through vaulted side chambers, and over one hundred and fifty yards of paved and colonnaded pavement. It led to the plaza of the great temple, the most imposing detached building in Jerash. It was eighty-eight feet long and sixty-six feet wide. It was surrounded by great columns, and included a great

platform, one hundred and thirty by one hundred yards, which was also guarded by a colonnade. Some of the pillars of the latter are still protruding from the debris on the north side. The portico of the temple, like that at Baalbec, was an elevated platform, approached by steps as broad as the building. The first row of five columns are standing, the second row of four are all standing, and of the third row two are standing, or eleven out of the original thirteen. These columns are each thirty-eight feet high and six feet in diameter, and the capitals are most beautifully carved and well preserved. These columns, so large, so beautiful, standing out against the sky, are matchless in all Syria. The cella, badly ruined, is smaller than the sun temple in Baalbec, but with the portico and its forest of columns forms a larger building than its Baalbec sister of greater fame. The inner sides of the walls show plainly that they were once covered with plates of metal, or more expensive stone than the limestone of the region. The view from this great temple is also a superb one.

One hundred and fifty yards north of the temple is the second theatre, which was plainly an amphitheatre, intended for the combats of animals and wilder men. Its tiers of seats, its vaulted vomitarios, its dens for wild beasts, its broad stage, with rows of columns, fronting on the second cross street, make it a very interesting remnant of the ancient city life.

On the other side of the main street is an enor-

199 COLUMNS NO. 1, JERASH

201

Columns No. 2, Jerash

mous pile of ruins, which have been called a bath or caravanserai. Many of the cyclopean-walled rooms are still in fair condition, but the external adornments of gateways, arches, niches, and columns have disappeared. It stands on the edge of the brook, which is some sixty feet below it.

Two hundred yards beyond the southern gate, outside the city wall, are the massive remains of the Naumachia, or "Sea Circus." It was a basin two hundred and thirty yards long, and about one hundred yards wide, and, when clear of debris, fully fifteen feet deep. It was entirely encircled with at least four rows of stone seats, which would easily accommodate four thousand spectators. If there were other rows than those which show clearly in the photograph then more than four thousand could have been seated while watching the mimic warfare and sea festivals. The waters of the brook were diverted from its bed far above this point in the course of the stream and led by a subterranean conduit in order to fill this mammoth basin.

Just at the southern end of the Naumachia stand the fine remains of a triumphal arch. Its whole width is eighty-two feet, and the distance from the door-sill to the central stone of the arch is twenty-nine feet. The large amount of cut stone and carvings visible among the heaps of debris on all sides of it shows clearly that it must have been carried up many feet above the arch and most elaborately decorated. Attention might be called to the "lotus leaf" carving at the foot of the shafts of

each column. This may indicate an Egyptian inspiration in the mind of the architect who designed the arch. It was a stately adornment to the approach to a beautiful city, standing four hundred yards outside the gates in the walls.

The vicinity of the arch and the Naumachia was the location of the finest of ancient burial-grounds. The hills and rocks contain hundreds of tombs, and large numbers of black basalt sarcophagi litter the fields. This is a striking feature in all these Grecian cities,—the close proximity of the necropolis to their places of pleasure resort.

Before we started east of the Jordan, we heard that the Circassians were making havoc among the ruins of Jerash, as they have done at Amman. But this is not so. The colony which settled here about thirty years ago, after the troubles in Bulgaria, built their homes among the less important ruins on the east bank of the brook, where there do not seem to have been any important public buildings. The cut stone in that part of the city seems to be of smaller dimensions than that of the ruins already described, which are all on the west bank of the brook. In digging for stones easily handled, the Circassians have unearthed many inscriptions in Greek and Latin, and have adopted a good fashion of preserving all such inscriptions, by building them into the side posts or lintels of their doorways, so that the next archæologist who visits Jerash will find a large number of new inscriptions, all in plain sight.

The Circassians have cleared spaces for farming

205 EFFECT OF EARTHQUAKE ON COLUMNS AT JERASH

207 PERIBOLOS—LOOKING SOUTH

among the ruins on the west side, and have made narrow cartways among the ancient pillars, rolling many out of their places, and breaking up a few that they could not remove. But they have not yet begun to use any of the great buildings as quarries, and it is sincerely hoped that the government will not allow them to do so. The present Mudir of the Circassians is an educated and well informed man. When Dr. Torrance spoke to him about protecting the ancient remains of the Greeks and the Romans he responded very dryly, that the Circassians had a hard enough time in protecting their own living persons and present possessions against the modern Turk, without being obliged to take care of what was left of the ancient Romans, dead and turned to dust.

Among all the waves of emigration which have spent themselves along the frontier of this eastern desert, the Circassians are the most recent, and in some respects the most interesting. Prof. G. A. Smith says that "no power but Rome has ever held Eastern Palestine secure against the Desert." What Greece did in the attempt, we can see in the Greek cities of the Decapolis; what Rome did will never be effaced, because the lines of her magnificent roads, ending in cities and fortresses, will last as long as time; what the Crusaders did in that fitful and romantic dream of a hundred years is one of the most pathetic chapters of human history, and what Turkey is trying to do today can hardly have any more successful ending.

For from six hundred to one thousand years, the Bedawin have pitched their tents of hair among these ruins of past empires, and unmolested have pastured their flocks where gods and goddesses once held court, for emperors and the flower of the Greek and Roman worlds. In these later years, the Turkish government, claiming to be the paramount Mohammedan power, has been recognized as the guardian of the pilgrimage route to Mecca. This road lies just on the edge of the desert, and the safe convoy of the pilgrims yearly has been a difficult matter to arrange. For some forty years or more, the government has found bakhshish the most potent weapon, and every year a sum of one hundred thousand pounds has been distributed among the tribes who line the route. As the government has gradually strengthened its position in Damascus, it has coveted the rich lands east of the Jordan, and has slowly extended its hold on the highlands, by building fortresses and occupying ancient sites with garrisons. Irbid (Arbela) was seized some thirty years ago. Then Salt and Madeba fell. Kerak held its own semi-independence until twelve years ago, and Shobek fell only four years ago. About that time the government hastened to stretch a line of telegraph from Damascus through this eastern highland, and on southward to Medina and Mecca, making its occupation more easy and certain.

In 1864, when Russia conquered the Caucasus, rather than remain in subjection to that power, the

211 PERIBOLOS—LOOKING NORTH

213 THE GREAT TEMPLE, JERASH

Circassians chose to migrate to Turkey, and nearly the whole nation of fifteen tribes, four or five hundred thousand people, came into Turkey. The greater part of them found homes in Asia Minor. But one section served the government well in the Bulgarian troubles of 1876 and 1877, and when Europe decreed that they should leave the bloody plains and cities of Bulgaria, the Turkish government decided to pit them against the Bedawin of the desert, and brought many thousands of them into the country east of the Jordan, and has slowly driven them like a wedge down the highlands, until there are now not less than forty thousand of them in the various colonies.

The policy of the government has been a simple and consistent one. The government claims all the ancient buildings and fortresses of all ages, no matter what tribe of Bedawin may tent among them. Very often when the ownership of the land comes into question, the government catches the poor Arabs on the horns of a dilemma. "Who owns this land?" asks the government agents. "We do," answer the Arabs. "Well, where are your *tabu* deeds, and when did you pay your taxes?" When the sum of back taxes claimed is equal to or more than the value of the land, not to mention the absolute poverty of the Arabs, their only escape is to deny their former statements, and be glad enough to prove that they do not claim or own it. Then the government invites the Circassian colonists in, gives them the vacant lands, furnishes

seed corn, yokes of oxen, frees them from taxes and military conscription, and gives them a free hand in driving the Arabs back into the desert; —this is exactly what has happened at Kuneitereh in the Jaulan, at Jerash and Amman in Ajlun, and at Wady Seir in the Belka. The result is that these Circassians, originally strong and free, continue to cherish the most unrestrained love of independence. Their colonies are joined to each other by rough wagon roads, by a common language, common modes of life, ties of marriage, and of uniform action in their relations to the Turkish government. While serving nominal masters, in holding this ancient frontier of the desert, they constitute a semi-independent league, like the ancient Decapolis, and will surely be heard from in the changes and progress of the twentieth century.

About Kuneitereh as a centre are twelve or thirteen villages; Jerash and Amman have many outlying villages connected by rude carriage roads. Wady Seir, in a rugged wooded valley leading down from the Madeba plain to the Dead Sea, was occupied twenty-five years ago, and Amman about the same time. But Russia has just contributed a new colony. They landed in Beirut about November, 1901, and journeyed via Damascus to a new location called Zaur, on the road leading from Salt to Madeba, three hours beyond Wady Seir. We camped at the new colony when it was only four months old. The Sultan gave lands belonging to, or

217 LARGE THEATRE, JERASH

219 THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN, JERASH

claimed by, the Arabs and the people of Salt; to each family were granted a yoke of cattle and twenty bushels of grain; they were freed from taxes for three years, and from the military conscription for a period undetermined. The Circassians of Wady Seir came over and aided them in building houses, which are arranged in orderly streets, with yards and gardens attached to every house. The foundations are of stone, the upper walls of the sun-dried brick, and the porch pillars and roof beams of clean unhewn timbers brought from Wady Seir.

They have brought their own agricultural implements, they retain their own heavy clothing and astrakan caps, and each man wears a short sword, which hangs directly in front of his body, and not at his side. They have beehives, and build curious wigwam-shaped shelters for their chickens and other fowls. They have made wagon roads to Seir, to Amman, and all over the mountains round about for wood and timber. They seem in every case to strike for a location with a fountain, or by a running stream, leaving the ancient fortresses, which are dependent upon rain-water cisterns, to the straggling Arab settlers.

These Circassians are a strong, stolid, stubborn race of men; they seem to despise the Arabs, and have none of the Arab graces of conversation or hospitality. Our muleteers, being accustomed to bicker and barter for an hour over the price of a load of barley, could make no progress with these silent men of a single word—"Take it at that price, or

leave it—or I will," with an ugly look, was a new experience to our Druzes, famous for their finesse and interminable dialogues on the most unimportant matters.

Only the passing of years will show whether the Turkish government will be any more successful than the powers which have preceded it, in keeping back or bringing under control these most unruly forces of the desert. The present policy includes four elements,—two of them new, and two very old. The old form of military occupation is an expensive one, and is successful only so long as the central government can spare the many battalions needed. The idea of colonization, by a people of different tongue, and habits, and religion, is also as old as Alexander the Great. The two new elements are the telegraph wire joining all the military centres, and already referred to, and now the Mecca railway, following the line of the pilgrimage, which will be mentioned in a later chapter. The sword, the Circassian wedge of colonies, the telegraph wire, and the railroad is the newest combination in this most ancient of problems, and one can but wonder what the verdict of the twenty-first century will be, when its statesmen and historians look back over the century that is still so young.

There is one thought that forced itself upon us from a missionary and philanthropic point of view. Something should be done by the Christian Churches of England or America for the Circassians. They are a strong race, and will surely play

223 NAUMACHIA, JERASH

225 The Arch of Triumph, Jerash

an important part in the changes which the rolling years will bring, even among the desert tribes. If touched and redeemed by principles of righteousness they will be a power for good. If left in neglect their future history will be no better than their past, which has been that of a marauding and warlike people. Their government has been a curious compound of constitutionalism and feudalism but they have been characterized by a faithfulness, to those whom they owned as masters or claimed as allies, and have shown at many stages of their history an invincible love of independence, for which they have willingly sacrificed all their earthly possessions. The yoke of the Turkish government is at present a comparatively light one. What may happen if ever that weight is increased is not hard to guess, hence the need of some efforts to cherish and develop the better traits of their strong characters.

CHAPTER X

JERASH TO MADEBA

FOLDING our tents in the early morning, we took a longing look at the massive ruins across the brook, while they were still partly in the shadows and partly flooded by the rising sun. The splendor of the city in its days of prosperity and glory must have been dazzling, for even in its ruins, despite the flight and the heavy hand of time, it remains one of the great sights of our earth. Our caravan wound in among the Circassian houses, down a steep road, across the brook, through a breach in the ancient city wall, past the Naumachia, and on to the Arch of Triumph. From there we took our farewell view, charmed by the superlative beauty of the city in its setting of shapely everlasting hills, yet saddened by the thought that no human eye can ever again behold it as it was, when thronged and throbbing with the men and women whose hearts conceived and whose hands reared its peerless structures, as offerings to the gods and goddesses of Grecian mythology and tributes to their ideals of human life and destiny. One can hardly imagine travellers of some coming age

hunting and shooting partridges among the ruins of the churches and public buildings of New York City, or fastening their tent ropes to the stumps of the columns in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine; but this much remains true, that if any cataclysmal flood of barbarism should sweep away the inhabitants of Manhattan Island, its buildings would sink to dust and heaps of rust, while Jerash would still defy the mouldering work of time, so finely, so grandly, so solidly did those ancient Greeks plan and build.

From Jerash to the Zerka was a ride of two hours, among the cultivated fields and down a winding valley road, which had been cleared and smoothed in preparation for the coming of the German Emperor. Some one in power at Constantinople thought that his meteoric Majesty might suddenly announce that he would journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, by the desert way east of the Jordan. So orders were given and the people in this region cleared a good bridle road, all the way from Jericho, via Salt and Jerash, to Mzerib, the end of the railway to Damascus.

During these two hours we descended over a thousand feet,—from seventeen hundred and sixty feet at Jerash to seven hundred at the blue-gray stream of the Zerka,—and rested for a time beside this great landmark in human history.

The Zerka, meaning the *Blue*, is the modern name for the ancient Jabbok, a river which figures early in human history (Genesis xxii., 22).

Jacob wrestling with the angel in the darkness, by the side of this tortuous stream, after the still more tortuous years of his early manhood, is one of three pilgrim shrines of the human soul. The highest and best of our human race will ever need to kneel at the Jabbok, and where the fifty-first Psalm cuts human consciousness, and at Calvary. Somewhere in every human life a man must meet and reckon with his old self, his past history, as Jacob met Esau again, and in that meeting decide the destiny of his soul.

"One has seen this Jabbok from one's childhood —the midnight passage of a ford, the brief section of a river gleaming under torches, splashed and ploughed by struggling animals, and the cries of women and children above the noise; and then, left alone, with the night, the man and the river, the wrestle with God beside the struggling stream, and the dawn breaking down the valley on a changed life. Now, to-day, there is no river in Syria which you associate more with the height of noon; groups of cattle standing to the knee in water, brakes of oleander bathed in sunshine, and a fair array of fields on either side, scattered over with reapers, and men guiding water by ancient channels to orchards and gardens. From first to last, the valley of the Jabbok is of great fertility. The head-waters of the river rise on the edge of Moab, at a point some eighteen miles from the Jordan, to the east of the water parting. The river flows at first desertwards, under the name of Ainman, past

Rabboth Ammon to the great Hajj road. There it turns north, fetches a wide compass northwest, cuts in two the range of Gilead, and by a very winding path turns west, then southwest to the Jordan. The whole course, not counting the windings, is over sixty miles. The water is shallow, always fordable, except where it breaks between steep rocks, mostly brawling over a stony bed, muddy, and at a distance of a gray-blue color, which gives it its present name of the Zerka. The best fields are upon the upper reaches, where much wheat is grown, and almost nowhere on the banks are you out of sight of sheep or cattle or tillage. A great road from the Jordan follows the valley all the way to the desert, another runs from the desert by Amman to the west. The river has always been a frontier and a line of traffic. Some day the valley will be very populous and busy. Yet the highest fame of Jabbok will ever be its first fame and not all the sunshine, ripening harvests along its live length, can be so bright as that first gleaming and splashing of its waters at midnight, or the gray dawn breaking on Israel next morning. The history of Gilead is a history of material war and struggle, civilization enduring only by perpetual strife. But upon Jabbok its first hero was taught how man has to reckon in life with God also, and that his noblest struggles are in the darkness, with the Unseen."[1]

The Zerka or Jabbok cuts Gilead in two almost

[1] G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog.*, p. 583.

equal parts. According to ancient geography, Gilead comprised all the country between the Yarmuk and the Arnon, that is, the lands and mountainous regions north and south of the Jabbok in what is now known as Ajlun, and the Belka. Ajlun, with its capital of the same name, five hours west of Jerash, is part of the country once included within the area of the Decapolis, while the Belka, or country between the Jabbok and the Arnon, corresponds almost exactly with the Perea of the New Testament times. The region of the Decapolis at the time of Christ was predominantly Grecian, while Perea was a Jewish province. Hence in the Belka we find no such ruins as we see everywhere in Ajlun, and when we cross the Jabbok, we enter a country where perhaps three quarters of the names are either what they were in the days of Moses or translations of the same, that is, wherever they have been identified or recovered.

At the present day all the country north of the Zerka is governed from Damascus, while south of the river as far as the Arnon it falls to the care of the government at Nablous, which in turn is tributary to the larger centre at Beirut. South of the Arnon it again reverts to Damascus. It was thus in the days of the Romans; Galilee, Perea, and Judea were Jewish provinces, so that a pious Jew could journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, east of the Jordan, and thus avoid putting foot inside of Samaria. The fords of the Jordan and the ancient Roman bridges seemed to draw these provinces

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together. The Turkish government for some reason treats the Yarmuk as a minor boundary, and makes the Zerka and the Arnon the major ones.

After reaching the line of the great Roman road, coming up the Zerka from the Jordan Valley, we climbed the southern bank and for over two hours kept rising rapidly, passing two good fountains by the way, until we reached an ancient site called Ramman, where our barometers again registered twenty-seven hundred and fifty feet, or a rise of over two thousand feet, from the stream of the Zerka. There are fine ruins scattered all over this high tableland, and at Ramman there are remains which merit careful examination. The Circassians have come to Ramman and a long quarrel is on between them and the more ancient claimants of the arable lands. The roads fork here, one swinging eastward to Amman, another dropping down by a steep descent, crosses Wady Sulaihi, and going on to Salt; while a third road keeps on the ridge, making a long swing eastward, rounding the head of the valley of Sulaihi, reaching Salt by way of Remamin. We chose the latter road and greatly enjoyed the views of the highlands of Gilead.

It had been our plan to camp in Salt, but before noon we realized that the road was too long for our heavy caravan and so we sent back word that camp was to be pitched in Remamin. We then left the dragoman with the men and made a detour into the steep valley, ate our luncheon beside a running stream with fish in it, and entered Remamin at three

P. M., after six and a half hours' riding. Our mules were seven and a quarter hours in reaching the same spot.

Remamin occupies a fine site high above a valley, with a perennial stream which finds its way through Wady Sulaihi to the Zerka. Our barometers registered about eighteen hundred feet, and from a high knoll west of the town one could look into the Jordan Valley and across the country west of the Jordan.

The good farming lands, the ancient water-courses, the fine stream, the circles of stones, the ruins which have not been broken up to be built into the modern town, all point to this as a very ancient dwelling-place in the land of Gilead. The modern inhabitants, like those in so many of these trans-Jordanic towns, are made up of men who, a generation ago, found it to their best interests to leave their old homes and camp outside the influence of the Turkish government. But they are all Christians, and both the Greek and the Latin Churches have followed and within a very few years have reared two fine stone churches, whose ecclesiastics dispute with each other over the ancient remains of Christian churches and the more recent wrecks of human hearts. On the façade of the Greek orthodox church is a large terra-cotta medallion with the Russian arms, and the priest and school look to the Russian workers in Nazareth as their superiors; while the Latin monastery and church, draw their supplies and aid from Jerusalem.

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The amount of money already spent by the two great divisions of oriential Christianity is far out of proportion to the needs of the place, but is an evidence and example of modern zeal to claim and occupy the ancient Christian sites east of the Jordan. We will see many examples of this spirit as we move southward.

When we had finished our afternoon tea, we amused the people of the place by packing rifle bullets in the trunk of an olive tree some two hundred yards away. This also gave warning to any marauders that prowling about our tents would be attended with danger.

We attribute a great deal of our freedom from molestation throughout the whole trip to our continual rifle practice. Whenever we reached camp before dark, while the men were putting up the tents we would put up a mark and pound away at it. We had plenty of ammunition, and were not afraid of using it. We invariably had an interested crowd of spectators, and those who had guns were always invited to join us in our sport, and very generally to their discomfiture. The smokeless powder and our modern thirty-calibre, high-power guns were novelties, the value of which they were not slow to appreciate. The work of the guns inspired respect for their owners, and we found on several occasions that our reputation had travelled ahead of us. This condition of affairs we strenuously cultivated, and would strongly recommend the practice to others, on the general principle that

if you wish a primitive man's fullest respect, you must do something he prides himself upon a little better than he does it.

The next day, we hired the Sheikh of the village to take his horse and guide our caravan by an eastern route, and a more level road, to our next camping place at Naur, while we rode over the highlands and round by Salt. Again our barometers rose until we crossed the next ridge and entered a most beautiful wooded valley, which we followed for nearly two hours, until it ended at a fountain called the Robbers' Spring, a most ideal spot for highwaymen to do a quiet business. Then we climbed another ridge until we were thirty-four hundred and twenty feet above the sea, and looked over the whole of Southern Gilead. Truly it was a land of clear, pure breezes, with not a few fountains in its deep-cleft valleys, showing plainly that the soil would support an abundant forest growth. The vale we passed through was perhaps the most beautiful forest path in all our journey.

Salt lies in a narrow valley sloping southward, and then south by west. Its houses cling to the steep slopes, and are of a black and green color, because built of basalt; they have small doors and windows, and in many cases vaulted roofs of the same black stone. Even though twenty-eight hundred feet above the sea, the summer heat is intense in the narrow valley. The Church Missionary Society has had a station here since 1873, as

well as an organized church, with schools and a dispensary. We called at the dispensary, and found Dr. Ibrahim Saleeby at his task of receiving and relieving the motley crowd of sufferers, who had gathered from many towns and villages. He was surprised to see two strangers unannounced, but had good cause to know one of the party, seeing that one of us had married him seven years before in Lebanon. We tried to find another friend, a government official, but he was busy in the court and could not come. After resting an hour in Dr. Saleeby's home, and writing some letters to the friends in Beirut, we rode out of the town, and started for our camping-ground.

After leaving Salt, we found that none of the maps we possessed could make any claims to accuracy. The names of the towns were there, but that was all, and we were more and more dependent upon the people by the way. We had entered the region where the names were as ancient as the ruins, and carried us back to the story of the Exodus.

Our road struck due east, and crossed a number of small valleys sloping toward the Jordan and Dead Sea. We saw miles of ancient Roman pavement,—black basalt blocks,—and in three hours reached Ain el Basha, a lovely green meadow fed by fountains, where the government sends hundreds of its horses to pasture. Again the telegraph poles and wires were our guides, and as evening came on we quickened our gait, but even though we hurried,

sunset found us fully an hour away from our tents. Seeing that our caravan had gone by an entirely different route, there was no use asking by the way if people had seen them. We had named a spot that no map located and which none of us had ever seen. Just before sunset we passed the entrance to Wady Seir and looked down the frightful gorge leading to the Dead Sea; here we saw the houses of the Circassian colony, on a shelf-like plain in the gorge. Beyond the Wady Seir road we met several Circassians coming from the place chosen for our camp, but they had not seen our tents. They spoke Turkish and only a word or two of Arabic. We inquired carefully our way because it was almost dark, and before we left them, one kindly faced old man stooped down, ran his fingers along the track of a cart wheel, and made us understand that if we followed that track we would reach Naur. After darkness had settled, this cart track was like a thread in the catacombs. The ancient Roman road cut our track at many points, partridges called to us as we disturbed their early evening naps, the track wound up and down, in and around knolls, across the fields, and at length in the darkness below we saw the lights of the tents, and exchanged calls with the muleteers, who were overjoyed at seeing us again, after the rather long day's absence.

We camped at the fountain just below the new houses of the Circassian colony (see p. 216) and greatly enjoyed the warmth of a good supper and

the yielding camp beds, after the pounding of the saddles all day long.

The Circassians have shown their good judgment in lighting upon such a spot. Their new village is cradled between high hills, which are fairly well wooded at places, and afford interminable stretches of good pasture lands.

We had supposed that in camping at Naur, we would easily make Madeba next day in six or seven hours. We were, therefore, surprised the next day to reach Madeba after an easy ride of four hours only. We followed a narrow valley for an hour, and came out into the wide plain east of Jebel Naur, passing Elealeh, and almost before we knew it were at Tell Hesban, the ancient Heshbon, which was a flourishing city when the Children of Israel were still in the desert. It belonged in early times to the Moabites, and was a very ancient site. According to Judges xi., 16, when the Children of Israel came to Kadesh, they sent messengers to the King of Edom, and to the King of Moab, asking permission to pass through their territory, in order to reach the Promised Land. They offered to pass through on their feet, paying for their food, and all the water they might drink from the wells by the way. Both kings refused this request! Accordingly they turned southward into the desert again, compassed the land of Edom, skirted the land of Moab on the east, and came to the southern bank of the Arnon. They thus approached the northern part of the former territory

of Moab from the east and not, as at first intended, from the southwest.

Sometime previously the Amorites, of Western Palestine, had crossed the Jordan, fought the Moabites, driven them out from Heshbon, and made that city their own capital. Sihon, King of the Amorites, was there in his pride and power when the Children of Israel humbly petitioned for permission to cross his territory, on the way to the Jordan. His answer was to gather all his people together at Jahaz, to fight against Israel. Then took place one of the famous battles of Hebrew history, the first one fought in the conquest of the Promised Land, and ever after referred to in chronicle, lyric, and prophecy as a proof of God's guidance and an inspiration to act in the face of difficulties, and to trust in God. It was a Waterloo at the outset of their struggle, and its echoes resound through all Hebrew history.

"Sihon dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and the city that is in the middle of the valley [Arnon] and half Gilead even unto the river Jabbok" (Josh. xii., 2), which included all the plain of Madeba. This the Children of Israel took possession of, driving out the Amorites, and for three hundred years at least occupied the city of Heshbon. In the division made by Joshua, it fell on the borders between Reuben and Gad, and though rebuilt by Reuben it was made a Levitical city. In later times the Moabites regained possession of

Heshbon, so that it is mentioned as a Moabitish town in the days of the later prophets. It is mentioned thirty-eight times in nine books of the Old Testament, and sinks into oblivion under the denunciations of Isaiah and Jeremiah, until the time of the Maccabees, when it looms up again, presently to disappear from history.

The ruins occupy a large extent of country, and centre about the Tell and another eminence crowned by the remains of a castle. The hillsides are strewn with debris, among which are visible many vaults and massive walls.

The English surveyors who made such a brilliant attempt in 1881 to proceed with the survey east of the Jordan used the remains of the castle as a landmark and measured a base line from Heshbon to Kefr el Wusta, nearly four miles long.

Two hours north of Heshbon, while traversing the line of the old Roman road, we noticed the curious way in which miles of gently sloping lands had been divided into great terraces by lines of black rock built with cement into dikes that ran all over the country. At places, the level terraces resembled great tennis courts. As we neared Heshbon and the hills about the ancient city, these walls or dikes increased in number and in many cases ran like rulers straight up and down the hillsides. When near Heshbon itself, we noticed that nearly every terrace or slope had a cistern at its lowest corner, and it at once became clear that this was an ancient device for dividing and securing

the rainwater which fell on each man's land. On the more rocky slopes the rain was, of course, the only "crop," and each owner guarded his rainfall as carefully as modern ploughmen do their portion of the running streams. Recalling what we had seen in the Ajlun district, and noting the same diking about Madeba, Diban, and a dozen other sites, the whole system became clear. There is not a tree or a fountain for miles on that Mishar plateau, and it is very plain that the ancient inhabitants depended almost wholly upon cisterns, of which there are thousands in and about the larger ancient sites. As an addition to the cisterns, they also constructed open pools, which caught the rainfall of larger areas than any one individual could control. At Heshbon are the remains of a tank one hundred and ninety-one feet by one hundred and thirty-nine feet, having a depth of at least ten feet. Another and much larger one will be noticed at Madeba. The suggestion comes very naturally, that these tanks or pools were an important and in some cases a beautiful feature of the ancient cities, because the Shulamite's eyes in the Song of Solomon (vii., 4) are said to be as beautiful, perhaps as deeply beautiful, "as the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-Rabbim."

From Heshbon to Madeba was a beautiful ride of two hours over the wide plain, which seemed to touch the horizon in the east and south, and which swept out westward till it ended in Neblous headland. The mound of Madeba was visible an

hour or more away, while the new Greek church stood clear against the sky, its dimensions enhanced by the utter lack of any other object, tree, shrub, or animal, with which to compare it. Its new tile roof with that of the Deir, beside it, was certainly a strange sight, in this wide plain, just after we had been living over the history of the Exodus, among the ruins of Heshbon. We pitched our tents on the threshing floors, west of the Greek church, and after presenting a letter of introduction to the Greek priest in charge, obtained permission to draw water from one of the church's ancient cisterns.

CHAPTER XI

MOAB

MOAB, the land of the Moabites, embraced a stretch of trans-Jordanic territory from the watershed south of the Jabbok to the deep cleft of the Arnon, and beyond that to the Zered, or the modern Ahsa. Its western boundary was the Jordan and the Dead Sea, while its eastern boundary was the desert. Its dimensions were, perhaps, not more than seventy-five by forty miles, giving an area of three thousand square miles. Of this there was a narrow strip of plain along the Jordan, then the steep slopes and precipitous valleys reaching up into the highlands, but more than half was high table-land, ranging from two thousand to three thousand feet above the sea. On this table-land was built the line of ancient cities whose ruins attract the traveller of to-day, and whose names carry us back to the Exodus and the wanderings, and whose fate, under the judgment of God, speaks so eloquently of the power of God in the vicissitudes of human history. These cities begin with Elealeh and Heshbon in the north, and extend

southwards in the line of Madeba, Diban, Aroer, the city in the valley, Ar of Moab, Kir of Moab, Luhith, and Zoar. We visited all except the last two, whose sites are not fully agreed upon, but most probably to be found near the Jordan or Dead Sea, and not upon our line of march over the table-land.[1]

Moab is mentioned once in Genesis, and again in the Song of Moses, Exodus xv., 15, but its history begins in the third part of the Book of Numbers, chapters xxi.–xxxvi., since the scene of the last fifteen chapters, and that of all the Book of Deuteronomy, are in the plains of Moab. The wanderings ended when the Children of Israel crossed the brook Zered (Num. xxi., 11–13), but several months elapsed[2] before they crossed the Jordan, and all the events of this period, except the campaign against Og, King of Bashan, took place in the plains and land of Moab. The episodes mentioned extend from the end of the wanderings to the beginning of the conquest of the Promised Land, west of the Jordan. After Sihon, King of the Amorites[3], and Og, King of Bashan, were overcome, Balak, King of Moab, made vain use of enchantments against Israel. He called for Balaam, son of Beor, to come and curse "this people, for they are too mighty for me," but, instead of malediction, he heard from

[1] Moab was explored by Seetzen in 1808; Burckhardt, 1812; De Saulcy, 1853; Tristram, 1873, and Conder, 1885.

[2] Numbers xxxiii., 44–48, mentions five encampments, between the east and west borders of Moab.

[3] See preceding chapter, p. 243.

Balaam the glorious future of Israel (chapters xxii.–xxiv.). Here occurred also that sad lapse of the Israelites into idolatry (chapter xxv.) at Shittim, and their entangling defilements with the Moabites whom they had conquered. Here also took place the second numbering of the people (chapter xxvi.), after the ravages of the plague, the appointment of Joshua as successor of Moses (chapter xxvii.), the allocation of territory to two and one half tribes east of the Jordan (chapter xxxii.). Here Moses gave directions concerning the partition of the land west of the Jordan among the remaining tribes, and appointed the cities of refuge (chapter xxxv.). Here also in the plains of Moab, Moses delivered all the final commands of the Book of Deuteronomy, and after his farewell address on the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year, ascended Nebo for the last time and died. Thus in the land of Moab ends the Exodus and the wanderings, Joshua takes command, Moses dies, the pentateuch closes, and the conquest of the Holy Land begins.

The great charm of a journey in this ancient world is first the fact that almost all the names remain unchanged to the present day. This fact has already been mentioned, but it will be referred to many times as we go southward. Then, the great light such a trip throws upon the wanderings of the Children of Israel is another of its attractions. It is said of those composing the British Survey that not a single member of the expedition

returned home without feeling more firmly convinced than ever of the truth of that sacred history which they found illustrated and confirmed by the natural features of the land. The mountains and valleys, the very rocks, barren and scorched as they now seem, furnish evidence of the difficulties and dangers through which Moses, under God's direction, led His ancient people. Nebo and the top of Pisgah, like the Jabbok, are another landmark in human history, where man is taught that he must meet and reckon with his old self, alone with God, for there we read that Moses, at God's command, went up and viewed the Promised Land which he was not to enter, and "died there in the land of Moab, according to the Word of the Lord" (Deut. xxxiv.).

Then the land in its present desolation, its insecurity, its lawlessness, its mournful ruins, is an open commentary, lighting up with electric flash the heavy pall of denunciations heaped by the prophets upon the lands of Moab and Edom. For Moab is mentioned one hundred and fifty-eight times in the Old Testament, thirty of these references occurring in one chapter in Jeremiah (chapter xlviii.), where the fate of the land and its people is the bitterest meted out to any of Israel's enemies. Moab's "cities shall become a desolation without any to dwell therein, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from [Moab's] blood." The one gleam of sunlight over her breezy plains is the idyllic story of Ruth, the Moabitess, grandmother

to King David, and in the line of "the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

And finally, one of the charms of a journey in the plains of Moab is to see repeated before one's eyes the transformation, too often a melancholy one, of the sons of the desert into the dwellers in cities. Professor George Adam Smith, in his *Minor Prophets*, makes much of this fact, and points out the many references in prophecy to the evils and temptations attending the change of the Children of Israel from their tents in the wilderness to the palaces of cut stone in which they copied and were overcome by the luxury and vices of the nations and people whom they had superseded, and should have exterminated.

The great Bedawin tribes that inhabit the desert, and who scorn the dwellers in cities, are constantly pushing spent waves of humanity into the plains of Moab, whose vales are like bays along this stormy shore of modern civilization. These remnants of tribes then come under the shadow and power of the Turkish government, whose policy is to force them to settle down, to give up their roving life, their plundering, warlike customs, and to submit to taxation and control. So from Damascus southward, along this desert shore of civilization, one can see the transformation in all its stages. Only three years ago did Muhammed el Faour, the Emir of the Arabs in the Jaulan, venture upon building a great stone dwelling in the Huleh, where he

spends the winter, and then takes to the black hair tents for two thirds of the year. Few of his people have yet ventured to imitate him. At el Husn Ajlun, we saw a miserable colony of these Bedawin living in filth, the women acting as beasts of burden for the more active Christian dwellers of the town, while the men were all away, tending the flocks of these same Christian or Moslem masters. Being accustomed to the freedom of the desert, to move their tents when the ground beneath became defiled with vermin, or polluted by the cattle and dogs, and made to accommodate themselves to the different and narrower environment of a small yard and a sunless, windowless room or two, they deteriorate frightfully in body and morals and die like sheep when disease invades their settlements. At Kerak, we saw families who have lived in cities for a generation or two; at Tafileh and Shobek, we saw those who spend half the year in the cities and half in the tents, but in every case, even where there was evidence of wealth, there were too plainly seen the sure signs of rapid deterioration. Nothing but the most generous and careful government treatment could so much as check this deterioration, but, alas! there is not the faintest beginning of any effort in this line. From careful inquiry we learned, that every male Bedawy who came under government control was reckoned as being worth about fourteen *medjidis*[1] yearly to the Sultan's treasury. But sadder to relate, and this perhaps without the

[1] About $12.50.

Sultan's knowledge, perhaps against his wishes, every such Bedawy is worth yearly fifty *medjidis* to the hungry officials, who administer little law except the whip in their dealings with him. To mark the stages of the Bedawin transformation, as they sell their fine horses, break their long spears, lose their fine clothing, and sink into the poverty, filth, and disease of these border towns, was one of the saddest sights of our journey. For obvious reasons we must refrain from entering further into details of this kind, being guests of the power that controls these regions.

Moab's history is mainly that developed in connection with Israel. From Genesis xiv., 5, we learn that the original inhabitants of the country were called the Emim, and that they were subjugated by Chedorlaomor in the days of Abraham. This conquest opened the door for the entrance or extended possession by the Moabites, who in respect to language and descent were related on the one side to the Israelites, and on the other to the Edomites. The sun was their national god. He was worshipped with human sacrifices, and especially with the offering of little children (2 Kings iii., 27). Baal Peor is another divinity mentioned in the time of Moses, the rites of whose worship were extremely licentious. The people seem to have been addicted to the basest sensuality, and were a snare to Israel for centuries.

The land of Moab was assigned by Moses to Reuben and Gad. Reuben received all to the

south of Hesban, but never seems to have been the exclusive occupant of the portion assigned. After the Reubenites had aided the other tribes in the conquest of Western Palestine, they returned to wage a constant warfare with the Moabites, and in the course of that warfare, Reuben practically disappears from among the tribes of Israel, since the Moabite inscription of the ninth century B.C. mentions the men of Gad as dwelling immediately north of the Arnon, but does not know the men of Reuben. The remnant of them were carried off by Tiglath Pileser to Assyria.[1] In Saul's day the Moabites had their own kings, and were numbered among his enemies. David fought them and punished them with great severity (2 Samuel viii., 2). When the kingdom was divided, Moab followed Israel and from 2 Kings iii., 4, we learn that King Mesha paid to Israel an annual tribute of a hundred thousand lambs, and as many rams.

The Moabites were very zealous in promoting the revolt against Nebuchadnezzar; but when that iron king approached to take revenge, they joined him and looked on in peace while Jerusalem was besieged and taken. After that time nothing more is heard of them. From the Moabites the country passed to the Arabs and Nabatheans, who held it until 105 A.D., when it was conquered by the Romans. Its fate during the Christian centuries will be mentioned in the next chapter on Madeba.

[1] 1 Chron. v., 26.

One of the few remains of the Moabite occupation which have come down to us, and one of the most interesting monuments of antiquity is the "Moabite Stone," a slab of black basalt, three feet eight and a half inches high, two feet three and a half inches wide, and one foot one and a half inches thick, covered with an inscription of thirty-four lines in Hebrew-Phœnician characters. It was discovered in 1868, by Rev. F. A. Klein, of the Church Missionary Society, lying among the ruins of Diban.[1] Negotiations for its purchase at that time led to quarrels among the Arab tribes claiming an interest in it, with the result that they broke it into pieces, and carried them away. The gathering of the fragments, later on, is one of the romances of archæology, and the stone is now preserved in the Louvre at Paris. Its date may be reckoned about 850 B.C.

This stone gives an account of the war of Mesha, King of Moab, against the dynasty of Omri, which ruled over Israel.

After the death of Ahab, Mesha, who had agreed to pay to the King of Israel "an hundred thousand lambs and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool" (2 Kings iii., 4), rebelled; and Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the King of Edom marched against him. The Moabites were surprised by the Jewish league and compelled to retire from city to city, until they came to Kir-Haraseth (2 Kings iii., 25). Here King Mesha attacked the King of

[1] See p. 296.

Edom, but was repulsed. After this he sacrificed his eldest son to his god Chemosh, upon the city wall, in sight of the invaders. This deed inspired his army with fresh courage, and they drove back the victorious armies of the allied kings with great slaughter, there being "great indignation against Israel." He set up this stone to Chemosh and he spread out and offered up "the vessels of the Lord" before Chemosh.[1]

The translation of the inscription is as follows:

1. I am Mesha, son of Chemoshmelech, king of Moab, the D-

2. ibonite. My father reigned over Moab for thirty years, and reign did

3. I after my father. And I have made this high place for Chemosh in Krhh on account of the deliverance of Me-

4. sha, because he saved me from all the kings and because he let me see my pleasure on all that hated me. Omr-

5. i was king of Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days, because Chemosh was angry with his la-

6. nd. And his son succeeded him; and he also said: "I will afflict Moab." In my days he spake thus.

7. But I saw my pleasure on him and on his house, and Israel perished with everlasting destruction. Now Omri had taken possession of all the [la-]

[1] Wright, *Bible Treasury*.

8. nd of Madeba, and dwelt in it during his days and half the days of his sons [or his son], forty years; but resto-

9. re it did Chemosh in my days. And I built Baalmeon and I made in it the reservoir [?] and I built

10. Kiriathen. And the men of Gad had dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old, and built for himself had the king of I-

11. srael Ataroth. And I fought against the city and took it and slew all the [people of]

12. the city, a sight unto Chemosh and to Moab. And I brought back from there the altar hearth of Daudoh [?] and drag-

13. ged it before Chemosh in Kerioth. And I settled the men of Srn in it, and the men of

14. Mhrth. And Chemosh said to me: "Go, take Nebo against Israel." And I

15. went by night and fought against it from break of dawn until noon, and to-

16. ok it and slew all of them, seven thousand men and boys, and women and gir-

17. ls and maidservants; for I had devoted it to Ashtor-Chemosh. And I took thence the altar hear-

18. ths of Jehovah and dragged them before Chemosh. Now the king of Israel had built

19. Jahaz; and he abode in it while he fought against me. But Chemosh drove him out from before me. And

20. I took two hundred men of Moab, all its chiefs; and led them against Jahaz and took it

21. to add to Dibon. I built Krhh the wall of the woods and the wall of

22. the mound. And I built its gates, and I built its towers. And

23. I built the king's palace, and made the enclosures of the [. . . for wat]ers in the midst of

24. the city. And there was no cistern in the midst of the city in Krhh. And I said to all the people: "Make for

25. yourselves, every one a cistern in his house." And I cut out the cutting for Krhh with the help of prisoner-

26. s of Israel. I built Aroer and made the highway on the Arnon.

27. I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was pulled down. I built Bezer, for ruins

28. . . . Dibon fifty, for all Dibon was obedient. And I reigned

29. over one hundred in the cities which I added to the land. And I built

30. Madeba and Beth-diblathen and Beth-baal-meon, and took thither the [herdsmen]

31. . . . the sheep of the land. And as for Horonen, there dwelt in it the so[n] of De[d]an. And De[d]an said

32. . . . Chemosh said to me: "Go down, fight against Horonen"; and I went down and . . .

33. . . . and Chemosh [resto]red it in my days. And I . . . thence ten [?]

34. . . .

CHAPTER XII

MADEBA

MADEBA in the days of the Maccabees, and for six centuries afterwards, was the most important site in the plain and land of Moab. Its ruins cover a low mound, two or three miles in circumference, and extend for a thousand yards toward the east and the west. The remains are plainly those of a Byzantine city, built partly out of the ruins of an earlier Roman city, for the Romans took this city from the Nabatheans, at the overthrow of the Nabathean power in 105 A. D.

During the Byzantine period it was a flourishing city, and was made the seat of one of the bishoprics of Arabia, since its bishop is mentioned at the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.). The best authorities conclude that it was sacked and destroyed at the time of the destructive march of Chosroes, the Persian, early in the seventh century. Hence we have here an ancient mound, which has lain undisturbed for over twelve hundred years, and from which is now being dug the remains of an episcopal Christian city of the fifth century of our era. Chosroes swept over this plain in 612–13

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MADEBA—GENERAL VIEW

A.D., and left a most marvellous palace in the desert, four hours east of Madeba.[1]

Twenty-five years ago Madeba was still a desert mound, lost in the Moab plateau. The Adwan Arabs, mentioned so often by travellers, pitched their tents and pastured their flocks about the mound, and in the floor of the ancient pool, without knowing or caring that the ruins of a once flourishing city lay beneath their feet. But in 1880 some Christians from Kerak, weary of being trampled upon by the more powerful clans and tribes, in their never-ending blood feuds and pillage, resolved to quit that city and found a new colony about the mound of ancient Madeba. In turning over the soil, preparatory to erecting their rude dwellings, they came upon extensive remains of cut stone, broken pillars, ruined cisterns, and fragments of ancient pavements in mosaic. Tristram, who visited the mound in 1873, before the place contained any settled inhabitants, said: "I have seen no place in the country where excavations seem more likely to yield good results," and the results have abundantly justified his expectations. For during the course of twenty-five years these modern builders have uncovered perhaps a dozen Christian churches and basilicas. Almost every ruin has yielded inscriptions, which are strangely enough all found in the mosaic pavements of these places of Christian worship. Among the larger Byzantine inscriptions is one referring to a basilica dedicated to the

[1] See Tristram's *Land of Moab*—appendix by Ferguson.

Virgin. And in the floor of a small ancient church is the following injunction: "In gazing upon the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and upon Him whom she brought forth, Christ, the Sovereign King, only Son of the only God, be thou pure in mind and flesh and deeds, in order that thou mayest, by thy pure prayers, find God Himself merciful."

When the Kerak people settled on the mound, the Latins seized a most commanding site and built a modest church and school, which now boasts a small clock tower. Other settlers came from the surrounding country, until there were several thousand people gathered together. Then the government, some fifteen years ago, made it a government centre, and built a small serai on the ruins of a church. The Greek orthodox people, in looking for a site, seized upon the ruins of an old basilica to the northwest of the mound, and here has been made the second great discovery beyond the Jordan, if we give the first place to the Moabite Stone. The site is in a little saddle, where the roads fork toward the Jordan and Jerash, and all around are fragments of mosaic pavements, which once drained their rainfall into huge cisterns, now the largest and cleanest in Madeba. Among these neglected fragments of ancient pavements was found the precious mosaic map of the fifth century.

It is now known that in 1884 a Greek monk living east of the Jordan wrote a letter to the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, telling him of a mosaic pavement at Madeba, covered with the names

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of cities such as Jerusalem, Gaza, Nicopolis, Neapolis, etc. The Patriarch Nicodemus made no answer, but after he was exiled and Gerasimos put in his place, the new Patriarch found the letter of the Madeba monk, six years after it was written,—that is, in 1890. Gerasimos, guessing that this was an important archæological discovery, sent a master mason with orders that if the mosaic was a fine one, to include it in the church which was to be built at Madeba for the use of the Greek population. The mosaic was at that time almost complete, and, by the testimony of those who saw it, contained the names of Smyrna, and other towns as far away. But the stupid builder, in his great desire to build on the ancient foundations, destroyed the greater part of it, and drove a pilaster right through the priceless piece, that he did not completely destroy. After the mischief was done, and the greater part of the relic lost forever, he went back to Jerusalem, and reported that the mosaic did not possess the importance which had been attributed to it!

It was not until December, 1896, that Father Cleopas, the librarian of the Greek Patriarchate, went to spend a few days at Jericho. His Patriarch Gerasimos, still uneasy about the matter, urged him to push on as far as Madeba. When he returned in January, 1897, it was with notes and sketches which proved a surprise and a delight to the archæological world. Then—alas, when it was almost too late—measures were taken to preserve the mutilated fragments, and draughtsmen, pho-

tographers, and archæologists all hastened to the rescue. Our photograph shows the glass and wire screen and the iron fence now protecting it. Thus, to the Greek monk, to Father Cleopas, and the Greek Patriarch, belong the honor of having saved the fragment of this unique map of the early Christian centuries.

The large church which was built over the map cost fifteen hundred Turkish pounds, and bears on its front a terra-cotta medallion, the same as the one noticed at Remamin, bearing witness to the fact that much of the money came from Russia.

Many of the details we give of the map and the photographs of the map itself are taken by permission from a monograph by M. Germer Durand and printed by the Maison de la Bonne Presse, Paris.[1]

The map originally occupied the whole width of the church, which was about fifty feet long and from twenty to twenty-two feet from side to side. It was drawn from east to west, and not from north to south, as is the case in maps to-day. The point occupied by Madeba, which, alas, has disappeared, would have been located near the centre of the present nave, in front of the main door of the church. All the northern part of the map is lost forever, except two small and unimportant pieces. The part which remains, and in which there are also various breaks, embraces the country from Nablous to the mouth of the Nile. The orien-

[1] See appendix.

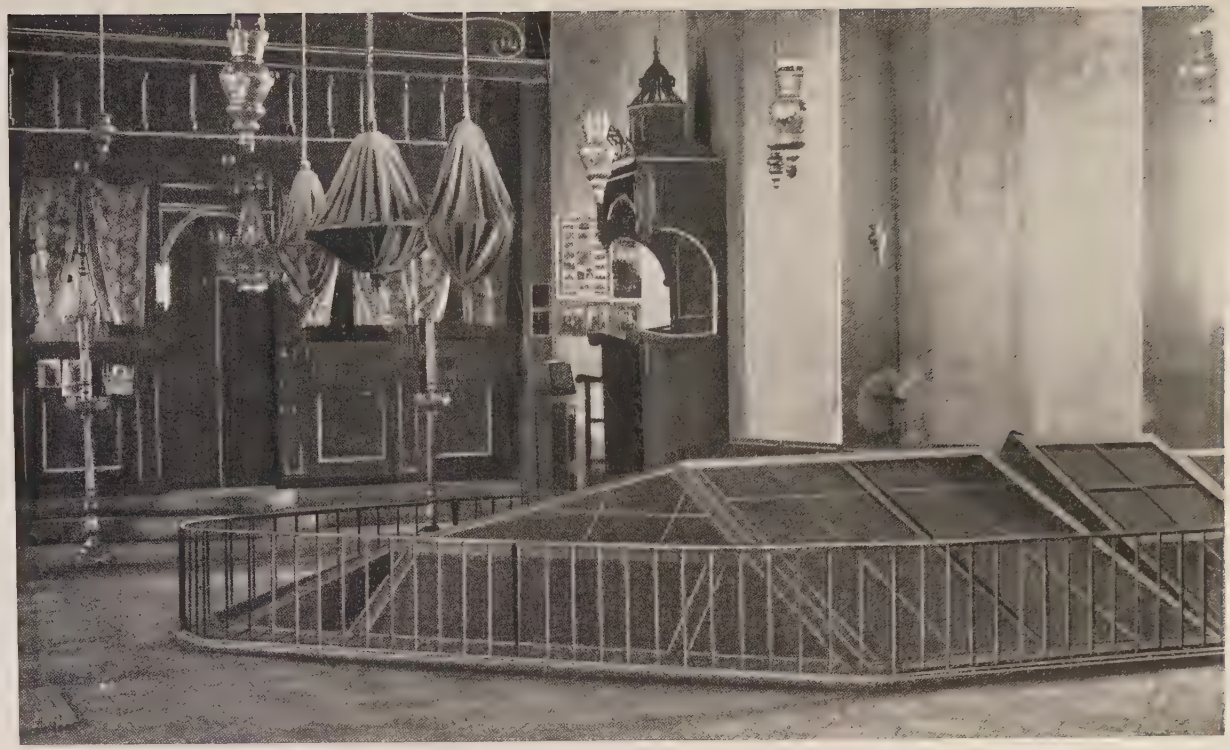
tation of the map is not exact. They took as a base the line of the seashore on the Mediterranean, and as this line runs from southwest to northeast, it follows that the axis of the map, which corresponds with the axis of the church, extended from Jaffa to Madeba, and consequently inclined visibly to the south.

One cannot expect in this map either the mathematical precision, or the multiplicity of details, which are the merit of modern maps. It is rather a rude sketch, designed to illustrate biblical history. Decorative art occupies a large place. Objects and names are traced in proportions which do not conform to any exact scale, and the perspective is wholly conventional, but it supplies a number of new identifications. The mountains are drawn with a combination of lines and colors which do not fail to produce on the eye the effect desired. The Dead Sea is a wavy expanse of blue, enlivened by two ships of impossible proportions, but altogether picturesque. On the Jordan one sees a ferry-boat, whose mast slides along a boom extending from bank to bank, while gigantic fishes play in the waters! In the desert palms mark the oases, and the lion pursues the gazelle.

In the larger cities, such as Jerusalem, the location of the principal streets is indicated by marking them with colonnades, and the façades of the main buildings are drawn to show their general aspect, some rounded and some pointed. The smaller cities are drawn in silhouette, with their walls,

battlements, and principal gates. Unfortunately, most of the larger cities are badly damaged, only Jerusalem remaining in its entirety. The map contains the names of about one hundred and thirty ancient places, some of which are new to history. The geographical names are all written above their cities, and some explanatory inscriptions are given below them.

One of the merits of the map, unique of its kind, is the wealth of explanations. In the first place, the fragment embraces, in whole or in part, the territory of the tribes of Simeon, Judah, Dan, Benjamin, and Ephraim. The name of each tribe is inscribed in large red letters, and is accompanied by an explanatory text, taken from the Bible. In this way parts of Jacob's blessings are worked into the design, as Zebulon has Genesis xlix., 13; Ephraim, Genesis xlix., 25; and parts also of the blessing of Moses. Benjamin has Deut. xxxiii., 12, written beneath it, and Ephraim has Deut. xxxiii., 13. These inscriptions will no doubt have some value in the department of sacred criticism of the Bible. Other explanations are taken literally from the *Onomasticon* of Eusebius. At certain points of the map these inscriptions occupy the whole of the surface, interfering somewhat with its clearness, but no doubt serving an important purpose in the eyes of its makers. In many cases, the localities are designated by two names, the ancient name, and also the name in use in the era of the map. The arms of the Nile have their names



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written either in the streams themselves, or by the sides of them.

The exact date of the map is a question which will no doubt be solved satisfactorily, but from the form of the letters it certainly seems to have been made before the beginning of the sixth century. Among the places pictured is the monastery of Saint Sapsas, on the east bank of the Jordan, and contemporaneous documents and references to this are dated 494–518. Hence we may safely call it a map of the fifth century A.D.

The closer study of it, in the exact reproductions, will no doubt disturb many traditions, and open up fresh controversies concerning sacred sites, which are of interest to all the warring sects in and around Jerusalem. One of these modern questions has already arisen, concerning the home of the father of John the Baptist. A tradition from the time of the Crusaders made Ain Karim, a village two hours west of Jerusalem, the "city of Juda," the residence of Zacharias and Elizabeth. The Latins erected a chapel here in 1860, on ruined vaults and walls, which they claim marked the site of the house or summer dwelling of Zacharias, and where the Virgin Mary visited Elizabeth. In the chapel they show a piece of stone which yielded at the place where Elizabeth concealed the infant John, for fear of Herod. In the Latin monastery of St. John, occupied by the Spanish monks, the high altar is dedicated to Zacharias, and nearby is a crypt, which it is claimed is the birthplace of John the Baptist.

The whole location is a sacred one, the money spent in developing it fabulous. But the map of Madeba places the "Beit Zachariah," or the home of John the Baptist, southwest of the Pools of Solomon, and curiously enough a mound exists, far away from Ain Karim, which still bears the name of "Beit Zhaggier," which is plainly a corruption of "Beit Zachariah." Some people have bought this new site, and the latest report says that they have uncovered the ruin of a church, whose ancient pavement is also a mosaic, apparently of the same general style and age as the mosaic at Madeba, and an inscription containing some reference to John or Zachariah.

This to their minds proves conclusively that they have discovered the "true home and birthplace of John the Baptist," and that this ancient church was built on the spot. The Latins so strongly entrenched at Ain Karim, several hours away, will not surrender easily, and the controversy may extend into the twenty-first century!

As to the origin and purpose of this unique map, Mr. Clermont Ganneau (*P. E. F.*, July, 1901) suggests that it may be a copy of the "picture" which St. Jerome speaks of as being found in his *Onomasticon.* Then, lacking further information, he calls in imagination and makes a brilliant suggestion, which by its peculiar fitness carries almost the weight of written testimony. "What," he says, "was the origin of this extraordinary work? What is its object? To what need or preconceived notion does

it correspond? What was the idea in fixing thus upon the pavement of the basilica at Madeba a representation of the Holy Land as faithful and as detailed as the means of that period permitted?

"What it is necessary to consider before all, is the position of Madeba. I am struck by one fact—it is that Madeba is situated close to Mt. Nebo; it was in the Byzantine period the most important town which stood in those regions, where the great memory of Moses still lingered. It was in the immediate neighborhood that the leader of Israel received from Jehovah the order to climb the summit of Pisgah where he was to die, and to contemplate in one supreme vision in all its extent this land of Canaan, the Land of Promise, which was to belong to his people, but which he was not himself allowed to enter. See Genesis xxxii., 41–52, xxxiv., 1–8, compare iii., 27–28, and Numbers xxvii., 12–13. Might it not be, perhaps, this geographical picture which was virtually unrolled under the eyes of Moses, that it was intended to reproduce in the mosaic of the basilica of Madeba? That is to say, in the neighboring town to this memorable scene! Why should they not have had the idea, of showing in a realistic way the thing itself that Moses saw, quite close to, if not at the place itself, where he saw it? Nothing was at the time more tempting or more logical."

The photographs of the map, with their accompanying explanations, will well repay examination.

The head of the Deir (monastery) at Madeba

was absent and the monk in charge was at first inclined to be rather churlish. But in the course of time he thawed out, and allowed us to photograph the interior of the church, and was obliging in helping us remove the coverings from the ancient map, in order to see it clearly. He called at our tents, and offered to show us about the town. After having seen the church, we went round the whole city. On the east, at the site of some new buildings, they had uncovered and were breaking up an ancient ruin which was a tangle of pillars and finely cut stones. In half a dozen houses are remains of ancient pavements, all of which have been carefully studied by the Greek and Latin monks.

At the southwest corner of the ancient city we examined the great pool. Its south and east walls are twelve feet thick, and its measurements inside are three hundred and eight feet from north to south, and three hundred and ninety-five feet from east to west. At the northeast corner are remains of a tower, thirty by twenty-five feet, which apparently guarded the wide stairs which lead down into the pool at this point. The pool caught the rainfall of two wide slopes, and must have been a great treasure in this dry plateau. It is not many years since it was used by the Bedawin, who had frequent bloody encounters around it. When the Turkish government came into the country, it put an end to these feuds by tearing out the wall at one point, so that it no longer retains any water, and hence the Bedawin do not fight over it! Since then, the

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people have been inclined to use its walls as a quarry, but the government has stopped that. A moderate expenditure of money would easily repair this magnificent tank, and it is hoped that the government may some day do this piece of work. Meanwhile, the modern dwellers in the city are cleaning out the ancient cisterns and making use of them wherever they will hold water.

West of the present town and across a small valley is a rounded hill with columns standing here and there, but its main interest is the fact that it was honeycombed in ancient times, and contains perhaps hundreds of roomy caves, which the poor Christians have converted into miserable dwelling places. The photograph on page 283 gives two entrances, but most of the doorways are rude holes in the ground, easily found by the smoke issuing from them. We persuaded a group of these poor people to sit long enough to be photographed. The entrance to their dwelling is immediately behind the woman on the right, while the mound and modern town of Madeba are seen behind them.

Toward evening, we had a call from the Mudir of Madeba, accompanied by several of the other officials. He was rather gruff at first, and inclined to magnify his own importance, no doubt thinking we were travelling without a permit, and that we should have called on him and brought some grist to his mill. But we melted his gruffness by politeness, and waived all his suggestions aside as to our journey, until he could no longer delay, and was

forced to ask us outright about our *tezkereh*. We said we had something better than a *tezkereh*, and for the first time produced our order from the Waly of Damascus. It acted like magic, and it was then our turn to make him feel the importance of our party, which we did as neatly as possible. He was then all eagerness to serve us, and make our stay pleasant. He offered us horsemen, but we thanked him, and said we would not need them until after we left Kerak. When he had gone, the telegraph operator remained to speak with us. He was born in Aleppo, and his father was in Yemen. We saw plainly that the young man had learned to drink and was on the wrong road. We talked earnestly with him, urged him to study English, and afterwards sent him a book for the purpose. From him we learned that Madeba is now reckoned by the government as the first station on the Hajj telegraph lines to Mecca. The line of the new railroad is only two hours east of Madeba, and if that railroad is ever completed and guarded, it will add greatly to the prosperity of the ancient town. We secured a few coins from those who came about the camp, but saw nothing of any great interest or value in their hands. On the whole we were pleased to see this ancient Christian site again occupied by Christians, even though they are miserably poor, and we can hope that they may some day grow into a prosperous colony on this great plain.

During the night we had a taste of how cold the

283 MADEBA—CAVE DWELLERS

winds can be, as they blow over this wide table-land, with not a tree or bush to break their force. One can stand on the mound and look from ten to fifteen miles northeast and south, without seeing a sign of any bush or tree above the grain. On inquiry, we found that, ten years before, the locusts appeared and returned for six or seven years in succession, eating up every living thing and completely ruining the vineyards and fig and mulberry orchards which had been planted years before. We saw no signs of any recent attempt to replant vines or trees.

CHAPTER XIII

MADEBA TO KERAK

FROM Madeba to Kerak was one of the most difficult stages on our route to provide for. It is usually accomplished in two long and tiresome days. The difficulty in the past has been the lack of water and the great insecurity of the country. Those who made it in two days usually rested only a few hours by the banks of the Arnon, and then pushed on by night. Before leaving Beirut we had decided to give three days to it, even though we must needs carry barley, charcoal, and water. So while in Madeba we made inquiries in many directions as to camping-places, and received the most conflicting information concerning the route. Some who had never been over it knew most about it. Our dragoman Milhem had pushed over it in great haste, and knew nothing of water except the Arnon. Our friendly relations, however, with the Mudir and telegraph operator gave us some information that enabled us to decide upon camping at Diban the first night and another friend or two, who will be mentioned later, enabled us to make the second halting place at water, and

thus our journey over this stage, turned out one of the most enjoyable of our trip. We will give some details here which may be of value to those who wish to follow us.

Our first care in Madeba was to secure barley enough for all our animals for two nights. The cook made the same provision in the matter of charcoal for cooking. We had planned to make some provision for carrying water, but our information was clear enough to enable us to dispense with that bother.

Early on the next morning we had many callers about our tents who watched the process of packing up with interest, while we caught several good photographs of the motley throng. It was 8.20 A.M. when we left Madeba, and winding round the western side of the mound we soon struck the wide road in the plain leading due south. Our last mule had hardly cleared the town when we saw two government horsemen galloping along the line, and they did not halt until they had overtaken us, who were some distance ahead of the caravan. We wondered what this new move might mean, and recalled the many stories of those who had been turned back in this same plain. The head horseman made a polite salaam, and said that the Mudir had neglected to take the number of the order from Damascus, and had sent him to request it of us. This we gave him at once. Then he said that even though we were willing to travel without escort, the Mudir would not run the risk

of having any of our animals stolen, and so sent the second soldier as a guard. We repeated our declaration of the day before that we were all well armed, a party of ten men, and did not feel the need of any escort while the Mudir was still in Madeba! One horseman then rode back with the number of the Waly's order, and the other hung about with such a plaintive look on his face that we immediately asked him what the matter was. When he found he could deal directly with us and not through an interpreter, he told us his story. He was one of the half-modernized Bedawin from Kerak, where he had a wife and family whom he wished to see. If we would only allow him to accompany us as a guard, he would serve us well and not expect any pay from us—to visit his home and see his family would be reward enough. Somehow his quaint speech and manner won us, and we told him he could stay with us. All through the morning we plied him with questions, and soon realized that we had a humble, trustworthy fellow in Hashim, for that was his name. He rode a rather sorry looking nag, had a huge sheepskin coat rolled up on the back of his saddle, and carried his long Martini across his saddle-bow. How he served us, and aided us in many ways, and how he remained with us all the trip, and never left us until we reached Jerusalem, will appear as we travel on. He proved himself as capable and as reliable a guard as any one could wish for in all that country.

Our barometers at Madeba registered twenty-

289 DIBAN—NORTHERN PORTION

eight hundred feet, and for three hours we moved southward over the beautiful level plain, dropping only about one hundred feet an hour. Our road followed the ancient Roman road, which was visible for miles behind and in front, as we rode along in the sunshine. At one point in a rugged little valley, the Roman road ran for a mile or two at a steep grade, built on the opposite side of the dry watercourse, like a modern railway embankment. This was one of the best preserved sections of such roads we saw on our trip.

After three hours in this plain, we looked (2500 feet) into Wady Waleh and the lower end of the Arnon. Gorge after gorge and cleft after cleft, each one deeper and lower than the other, formed a beautiful sight. Our road now led down into the Wady Waleh, and in the course of an hour we had dropped to seventeen hundred feet, and sat down by a beautiful stream for our luncheon.

Just above us on the opposite side was a Turkish guard-house, with several horses picketed around it, and soldiers passing in and out. Half an hour later, our caravan came into sight flying the two flags, Turkish and American, and presenting quite an imposing appearance as it wound down the slope.

Here, while at luncheon, we had a visit from another official, whom we found out to be the Mudir of Diban, whose function it was to keep order among and collect taxes from about a thousand Arab tents, scattered among the hills of this

little valley. He seated himself some distance away, and looked at us from the corners of his eyes. After a while we saluted him in Arabic, and he came nearer, but still kept his distant manner. We soon found that he was from Damascus, and when we began to name his friends and connections in that city he also thawed out, and after tasting our coffee we began to ply him with questions about our camping-ground. He gave us clear directions as to which cistern would give us water among the ruins of Diban. We then inquired about our second camping-place beyond the Arnon, and just here occurred an incident illustrative of the difficulties of finding water. Hassen Effendi, for that was his name, assured us that if we crossed the Arnon and climbed the southern table-land, and went to a certain spot which he described accurately, we would find abundance of water for our whole caravan, in a cistern that had recently been cleaned out. The soldier in uniform who sat with him spoke up angrily, and called him a liar, and said if we left the Arnon and climbed into that wilderness we would all perish of thirst. Hassan Effendi was thinking of our welfare and comfort in February, while the soldier was thinking of himself and his horse in August and September, when the water in that same cistern would be low, if not exhausted, and the soldier had no desire to see a caravan of eleven men and eighteen or nineteen animals spend the night around the well. But Hassan Effendi had won our confidence, after we had won his, and

293 DIBAN—SOUTHERN PORTION

the result proved all his directions and statements to be true. We had good reason to be grateful to him. Before we left him he poured out his sorrows at being left to vegetate as a Mudir, among these Arab tents, when he felt he was worthy of a much better post. So before we bade him good-bye he led one of us aside, and begged humbly that we would be sure and mention his name commendably before the Pasha at Kerak, and that the Pasha would easily understand what was meant. We willingly gave him that promise and fulfilled it two days later, when we called on the Pasha. Thus this man in the wilderness met us with coldness and suspicion, then softened into a friend, gave us some valuable information, and then parted from us with a humble plea that we would not forget to mention him. We trust that long ago he may have been promoted, and have found a post more to his liking than that lonely valley. The Arabs of this part of the world have a common saying, "Mountain never comes to mountain, but man may meet man," meaning that it is always best to part as friends, no matter what may have happened prior to the parting. We are sure that in all our long trip we left no enemies behind us, and would meet many old friends if ever we journeyed that way again.

From the bubbling stream, fringed with oleander and other bushes, we again climbed up a steep slope, and in a little less than two hours our barometers were registering twenty-five hundred feet again, and we were entering the ruins of

Diban. It took us only a few minutes to find the well with water, and leaving our men to set up the camp we set out to examine these extensive ruins.

It is hardly necessary to repeat that here among these heaps of debris was unearthed the famous Moabite Stone (see p. 256), and here many a traveller since has turned over many another stone, in the hope of finding something as valuable. The ruins cover a space of at least two or three square miles, extending over and around four or five hilltops. The remains are mainly shapeless masses of cut stones, among which one sees a variety of arches, vaulted roofs, and cave-like rooms, many of which have been cleared out, and are occupied by ploughmen and harvesters at certain seasons of the year.

Among these ruins are numberless ancient cisterns, most of which are almost filled with rubbish and debris, and all along the hilltops and in the shallow valleys we noted the dike-like boundaries which gathered the rainfall and drained it into the cisterns at the lower sides of these divisions (see p. 245). The few cisterns which have been cleared out lie east of the main road, and unfortunately are greatly defiled by manure, dust, and all the filth which lies about their mouths and drains back into them. A second boiling cleared it a little, but did not remove all the odor !

While wandering among the ruins we bagged several partridges, some wild pigeons, and started a fox or two. We visited the tomb on the hill to the

297 MUJIB, OR ARNON CANYON

west and noticed that the many walls there seemed in better condition than those on the other hills. There were not lacking at many points the recent traces of treasure hunters, for the fame of this black Moabite Stone will never fade from the memories of these people, and the story retold from year to year will not grow any smaller. One such occurrence incites the whole countryside to be on the lookout for coins and inscriptions, so that it is still safe to say with Palmer that there is probably not another such inscription above ground in all the land of Moab.

Toward sunset we took our rifles and fired away at marks and rocks, and took toll from each flock of wild pigeons that settled in our vicinity. Then we made all necessary arrangements for watching our animals in this lonely wilderness. We do not recall seeing a living soul from the time we left Wady Waleh until early the next morning, when the alarm was given, and the intruder proved to be the soldier from Kerak passing with the slender mail-bag to Madeba. This night in the wilderness, among the ruins of this ancient Moabitish city, recalled the first camp of the Children of Israel on the same spot, for here they passed their first night inside the borders of the Promised Land. It could not have been more desolate in their days than it was at our visit. Our outfit, however, would have been a strange one beside the tents of Israel.[1]

Among the other incongruities were the double

[1] Numbers xxxiii., 45.

telegraph wires which hummed away all night long above our tents, in the cool breezes of the plateau.

The next morning we arose to enjoy a hearty breakfast, and to replenish our larder with the pigeons and partridges that abounded among the ruins. Then we struck camp and started on one of the most enjoyable days of our trip. A ride of forty minutes carried us to the ruins of "Aroer, on the lip of the valley of Arnon,"[1] and here we dismounted in order to better enjoy one of the most magnificent panoramas of our journey. No idea of this enormous trench or canyon, cutting clear across the plateau of Moab, can be formed until the very edge is reached. Coming from the north or south on this route one would hardly suspect its existence in the apparently unbroken plateau until he looks suddenly into its yawning depths.

It appears in the Book of Numbers (xxi., 13) as the northern border of Moab, and is referred to many times later[2] as marking the entrance into the Promised Land, and as the southern boundary of Israel's possession, east of the Jordan. No one who has ever crossed it will wonder why it was made the political boundary of Eastern Palestine, for it is one of the grandest natural barriers conceivable, and the feat of leading such a motley and vulnerable throng as the Children of Israel into it, across it, and up into the plains of Moab may well add to the glory of Moses and Joshua, even though

[1] Deuteronomy iv., 48.

[2] Twenty-four times in the Bible.

301 DESCENT INTO ARNON CANYON

they avoided the chasm at this point and went to the eastward until they found an easier crossing.

The valley of the Arnon and the river in its bed extend from the shores of the Dead Sea, opposite En-gedi, straight across the plateau of Moab, for a distance of more than fifty miles. The cliffs on either side rise almost sheer from fifteen hundred to three thousand feet on either side, broken at places with impassable short ravines running north and south. We stood on the cliffs at a point about twelve miles east of the Dead Sea. Our view west (see p. 297) from the top of the gorge shows the rift in the plateau, and the second view west (see p. 301) from a point lower down, gives some clue to the general outlines, but no camera can reproduce the wild beauty or dimensions of the scene. A patch of the water of the Dead Sea was visible from a point nearby. The view southeast (see p. 309) shows clearly where the valley divides into two, the one arm running northeast and the other south-southeast, and each of these again divides into two. This view was secured with great difficulty in the face of the morning sun, but it reveals and explains clearly the use of the plural, "valleys of Arnon," in Numbers xxi., 14. The Children of Israel came into the great trough from the southeast, and across at least two, possibly four, of these branching valleys, which extend far into the desert plateau. It was across these hills that Balak brought Balaam, and took him to curse the Children of Israel, camped at that time on the Jordan

within the borders of Moab. This view southeast was grand beyond all description, and after we had seen it from a hundred vantage points, looking from the northern slopes and again on the south, it seems only right to say that the valley has no equal upon the earth, except the Colorado canyon in the United States, which is of course more extensive.

The valley of Arnon has received all too little attention from travellers. Standing on the northern brink of the chasm, where our trail led into it, we could distinctly see the small soldier's house on the opposite side about four miles away. Looking downward we gazed into a yawning abyss, over half a mile in depth. There are comparatively few places where a trail could be safely constructed down its sides. We found the "mail route" the most direct road, and it turned out a fairly good road, but even at that, the roughest trail in Switzerland would be easy and smooth compared with it.

The northern wall is not as rugged and steep as the southern. In the former the limestone strata are almost perfectly horizontal, and form a fine series of benches, and consequently a very difficult slope. But as it is more exposed to the prevailing winds and storms, it has been more affected by them. The southern side has not been exposed in this way, and moreover is protected by a layer of lava some one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet thick. This is the first lava we have seen *in situ* since leaving Gadara. Another feature of the cliffs

305 Arnon Canyon, Half-way Down, Looking Back

of limestone surprised us. Many of the strata we crossed, both descending into the valley and climbing out of it, were composed of solid flint. The layers were of all dimensions, some only an inch or two, while others were several feet thick.

The Children of Israel crossed the "valleys of Arnon," but we crossed the "valley," at a point just west of where it divides, and hence made a much deeper plunge. From where we stood we could look across to the southern edge of the plateau and see our road leading southward, but to gain that southern edge and to cover that air line, we climbed down a road seven and a half miles in length, descending about three thousand feet, and then up a steeper slope for six miles, until our barometers again registered twenty-eight hundred feet. In other words it means a drop of three thousand feet and an ascent of three thousand feet, a journey of five hours over a difficult road of thirteen miles, to cross the canyon of the Arnon at Aroer. If the map of Baedeker is correct in making the lowest point in the canyon three hundred and thirty feet, that is three hundred and thirty feet below the level of the Mediterranean, then the drop becomes so much the greater. But our barometers seemed to indicate that the bed of the stream is three hundred feet above and not three hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. It may be that the effect of the change of temperature, as we passed from the cool, windy plateau, to the moist, hot atmosphere of the river

bed below, hindered our barometers from telling the whole truth. At any rate we record the facts as we noticed them.

Our road began to drop some distance before we reached the edge of the canyon, but from that point we seemed to be at the jumping-off place or in the air all the way down. We had heard that the road had been mended by the government, and while it was steep enough at points to make walking more humane and safer than riding, one could ride the whole way down.

There were no dangerous steps and no slippery, impossible rocks, and while it seemed to be a rather hard descent, after the delightful roads on the plateau, its dangers and difficulties were all forgotten in the magnificence of the views that changed at each wind and bend in the descent. Another striking feature called for our deepest admiration. At a hundred points in the descent we noticed the remains of the Roman road, which those mighty conquerors dared to carry down and up the sides of this canyon. At thirteen hundred feet above sea-level on the southern side, we came upon a nest of broken Roman milestones, with partly legible inscriptions in Latin and Greek, lying on a little plateau where a Roman legion might easily have camped (see p. 313). We afterwards saw another group of five milestones, and another of two, all of which had been dug out and rolled over within a few years. Knowing that they had all been seen and copied by Professor Brunnow we

309 THE VALLEYS OF ARNON, LOOKING EAST

did not attempt to copy the inscriptions again. It is plain that even the Romans regarded this road as no mean feat in engineering, and each prefect or legion repairing or restoring the same deemed it worthy of a new monument which told of their toils. One of these stones, dating from 112 A.D., reads as follows: "The Imperial Cæsar, son of the Divine Nerva, Trajan Augustus . . . opened and paved a new road, from the frontiers as far as . . ." One would now give a great deal to be able to complete the mutilated inscription, for this is all that can be read. Other stones may come to light, and tell us plainly what legions held this country for the Romans, and who their commanders were.

We were two hours reaching the stream of the Arnon, and our caravan was fully an hour behind us. The pictures of the descent into the gorge (p. 301), and the road down the side (p. 305), at another shoulder, will give some idea of the vast proportions of the canyon. In the second picture, one of the travellers can be seen standing some distance below, on the trail. One can hardly speak of the floor of the valley, because there is none. The two photographs, "Arnon" and "Arnon, Bottom of Canyon," will show plainly that the two slopes join each other like the base of a V, and the stream worms its way among the boulders which are always falling from above and being carried toward the Dead Sea in the time of floods.

We turned from the road to the left, and went

up the canyon a short distance, where we found a bit of gravelly space, where we loosened our girths, and sat for an hour and a half beside the beautiful stream, fringed with oleander wherever there was enough soil and space to sustain the bushes. We noticed good-sized fish in the stream, and amused ourselves in catching a number of them.

The modern name of this river and canyon is the Mujib, and government officials obliged to journey back and forth between Madeba and Kerak speak of this descent and ascent, at all seasons of the year, as a test of endurance. When our muleteers arrived, never having seen the equal of this descent, they expressed themselves in no measured language, but even though they had worn themselves hoarse, and had sent up ten thousand supplications to all the saints they had ever heard of, and even though they had seen, in imagination, their animals go tumbling over a hundred precipices, the beauty and grandeur overcame them. We made them put down their loads, for it was still early, and rest the backs and limbs of the mules before beginning the still steeper ascent. After they had eaten and drank and bathed their faces and feet in the stream, their spirits revived and they shared with us the exhilaration and inspiration of the moment, as we told them what history clustered about these yawning valleys.

The road up the southern wall of the canyon was much shorter and steeper than that on the northern side. In the main, it followed the old

Water Carriers

ARNON CANYON

Roman Milestones

Roman road, of whose pavement there was stretch after stretch as good as it was eighteen hundred years ago. An hour up the slope are the remains of an ancient fort, with a huge water-tank in the mountain behind it. Higher up, the ancient Romans fairly hewed the line of the road in the face of the precipice, and when it reaches the layers of flint, which are forty feet thick, it is a marvellous piece of daring handiwork. One rides out on the southern plateau as through a doorway,—the cliff ends and the plain begins without any intermediate slope or ravine. We had climbed the ascent in less than two hours, but our barometers showed that the southern wall of the canyon was about two hundred feet higher than the northern side, an increase due to the thickness of the lava bed almost entirely.

While waiting for our caravan, we chose a camping-place about five hundred yards away from the precipice, and with the directions given by Hassan Effendi soon found the cistern he referred us to. Not far away from our camping-place stood the lonely guard-house which marked the gateway to Gilead, and there were two ragged soldiers occupying the gloomy rooms in it. They were suspicious at first, but when they saw that we knew the country, by our going straight to the well, and learned that we meant to spend the night nearby, they became friendly and loaned us their "water-works," consisting of a pole, a goat-skin water-bag, a bucket and rope, as seen in the picture (p. 313). Raschid

and Hamad made a trip, and the quivering skin, filled to the bursting point, soon lay by the side of our tent. To get water from it one had to unwind the strong cord from the neck of the animal and allow the water to fall from it into another vessel and then tie it again carefully.

We visited the guard-house[1] and found three gloomy rooms; one occupied by the soldiers, one reserved for the postman, and one for wayfarers. The soldiers said they often passed a week without seeing any one but the postman and found difficulty in getting enough to eat. At the time of our arrival, they were suffering most from the lack of tobacco, and seeing that they had not received any salary for many months, it was not strange that they had failed to send and buy some at Madeba or Kerak. This was one of the places where our bag of tobacco brought comfort to lovers of the curling smoke and we also saw to it that these two soldiers were well fed while we tarried in that spot. They guarded our tents and animals well and we parted friends.

Knowing that we must soon surrender the Waly's letter to the Pasha at Kerak, we thought best to pin it on a board and take a photograph of it at this point.

The next day's ride found us in the true country of the ancient Moabites and on territory that was never included in the allotment of Israel. We had a beautiful wide view of the plain rolling toward the east, where dwell the Arabs of the desert. The

[1] Called Kerakol Ras Mujib.

317 KASR RABBA

breezes were cool and fresh and the sky clear all the day long. It was an ideal day and a lovely ride. After ninety minutes we reached Shihan, an isolated hill and a village, whose name is supposed to be derived from Sihon, king of the Amorites; and eighty-five minutes beyond this we came to Kasr Rabba, whose extensive ruins strew the plain for a long distance. We photographed the eastern face of the ruined temple (p. 317). It was a square structure, built of very large blocks of shelly fossil limestone, the pillars in front being nearly five feet in diameter. We could not but remark the uninterrupted view extending ten to fifteen miles in every direction, and the numerous low mounds marking the sites of ancient towns. Then in seventy minutes along the ancient Roman road we came to Rabba itself, which was the ancient Rabbath Moab and once called Areopolis. After another hour and forty minutes in the open plain, where we kept with our caravan nearly all day for safety's sake, we swung round the shoulder of a hill (3450 feet) and there, as a great surprise, apparently a mile or two away, stood Kerak, almost like a picture in an old-fashioned plate. We were high enough above it to look almost into the city itself, and located as it is upon a hill whose top slants towards the north, it seemed as though we looked upon a model of the city, which had been tilted towards us, in order that we might see it more clearly. Between us and the city lay a ravine from seven hundred to a thousand

feet deep. The steep natural slope of the hill was continued in massive walls, which form the northern boundary of the city. At the extreme right were the remains of the great castle of Beibars ; on the extreme left, the large new Mektab el Ashair, "School of the Tribes," while the sloping streets and houses in between reached up towards and were surmounted by the great Crusading castle whose grim walls cut the sky-line high above the city. Here was a picture that we longed to have, but the afternoon sun was in our faces, making it an impossibility. The view marked "Kerak from the North" gives only the easternmost corner of the city and the large school building. It was another hour before we reached the fountain in the valley and climbed the steep slope into this ancient city of the Moabites, where we pitched our tents at the base of the rubbish heaps, on a space cleared by the Turkish garrison for exercise.

CHAPTER XIV

KERAK

OUR first care, after attending to the preliminaries of camping, was to send our soldier Hashim to the Governor to inform him that we wished to call an hour later. Even before we had dismounted, people old and young began to assemble, and before the loads were off the mules we had a larger crowd than we could manage. For a tenting-place, we selected the parade ground, near the castle of Beibars, and not far from the new military hospital. Toward the city were the huge refuse heaps (see p. 343), and these were soon covered with lines of squatting figures watching our operations. Soldiers sent from the castle to guard us cleared the camping space and saved all further annoyance, as far as the people were concerned. But they could not control the rollicking, crazy winds which kept the dust and rubbish flying about the tents during our stay in Kerak.

When Hashim returned, he announced that the Mutaserrif was ready to receive us. Having arranged the cameras, and having armed ourselves with the letter from Damascus, a walk of three

minutes brought us to the main street (photograph Kerak, main street, showing end of the new Seraia), leading to the new Seraia, built a few years ago upon an open space in front of the great Crusader ruins. We passed among the motley crowd of people and soldiers, and into the gloomy passage-ways of the lower floor of the building, up the stone stairways, guided by another soldier, and were ushered into the Governor's room. His Eminence Rasheed Pasha received us politely and Guatin Aga, Colonel of the garrison, acted as interpreter, since the Pasha preferred to speak Turkish, while we had as strong a preference for Arabic. Our first duty was to tell the Pasha who we were, where we had come from, and that we wished to spend the Sabbath in his city. His answer was a pleasant Oriental welcome, coupled with an offer to serve us in any way possible. We then presented the letter from the Waly of Damascus, which was addressed to Rasheed Pasha, and while he read it, we looked around the large room in which we sat. We were surprised and delighted to see on the wall opposite the Governor's table a full set of seven wall maps in Arabic, the work of our American press in Beirut. After he had read the Waly's letter, he was still more polite to us, and said he was ready to furnish us the guards necessary, and would send orders to the officials at Tafileh, Shobek and Maan, to do everything to make our journey safe and our stay in Petra pleasant. We then broached another question, which had to do with the

323 KERAK FROM THE NORTH

last stage of our journey. The Waly's letter said plainly that the Pasha at Kerak was to send us down *and bring us back*. Ordinarily we should have had to return by the same road to Madeba and enter Jerusalem via Jericho. But we wished to go from Petra down into the Arabah and south of the Dead Sea to Hebron. His first answer was a statement concerning the unsafe state of the country west of Petra, because the Bedawin tribes along the Egyptian borders were at war with their neighbors and each hostile party would be only too willing to molest us if they could thereby involve some other party and throw the blame upon them. We were prepared for this and assured him that being a party of twelve well-armed men and willing to protect ourselves, we were also sure that while "under his shadow" we would be perfectly safe. The Colonel, who had been seen in private by our faithful Hashim, now added his influence to our side, and after canvassing the three possible routes from Petra to Hebron, it was agreed that if we would return from Petra to Tafileh and strike down into the Arabah from that point the Pasha would agree and issue orders accordingly. We readily gave a promise that we would not go down either from Petra or Shobek, but return to Tafileh as directed. By so doing we could cross the Arabah among tribes who were within the jurisdiction and power of the Pasha at Kerak and be comparatively safe from molestation. This solution of the problem gave us real joy and removed the last

obstacle in the way of carrying out our cherished plans.

The maps on the wall furnished a new topic of conversation, and the Pasha was pleased to find that we were interested in the great school which he had been building, under the direction and with the sanction of the Waly of Damascus and the Sultan at Constantinople. Coffee was served, and the Pasha told us of his own visit to Petra the year before. The Colonel also enlarged upon the most recent enterprise of the Pasha, which consisted in stretching the second telegraph wire from Kerak to Mecca, and which involved changing nearly all the short and crooked poles for longer and stronger ones. The government levied on the whole wilayet of Damascus, and gathered from every village within forty miles of the city of Damascus a certain number of poplar telegraph poles. These were piled up in the public squares for months. Then orders were given for the villages and Bedawin to send camels to transport the poles, and the work of carrying and distributing them along the desert road was carried out with extraordinary energy and speed. When we returned to the tents, we carried out a resolution formed while conversing with Rasheed Pasha, and sent him a large folding map of the whole Turkish Empire, also the work of the American Press in Beirut, and to the Colonel we sent a map of Palestine and Syria. This was the only return we could make for their kind reception and their care over us, which did not cease

327 DEFILE AROUND KERAK

until we said good-bye to the two Kerak soldiers in Jerusalem.

The city of Kerak, a great natural fortress, is built on a triangular platform whose sides, not more than one thousand yards long, have been extended and brought level with the main rock by means of cyclopean arches and walls. This platform, dipping toward the north, forms the summit of a bold mountain spur, whose precipitous sides drop almost sheer one thousand to fifteen hundred feet to the valleys on the north and south. A very narrow neck at the southeast joins the platform and spur to the mountains which surround the city and fortress on every side. The angles of the platform are toward the east, the south, and the west, and on these angles were built the great fortresses which made the position an almost impregnable one for centuries of its history.

The ancient entrances to the city were four rock-hewn tunnels which Sir Charles Wilson (1898) says have every appearance of having belonged to the old Moabite city. Two of these are still preserved, and are unique even in this land of wonders. That on the west is the most accessible, and is still used as an entrance. A steep road zigzags up the slope of nearly fifteen hundred feet from the valley, and while still below the foundations of the city wall it enters a tunnel cut from the solid rock, makes two right-angled turns, and emerges inside the city. This western tunnel is nearly eighty yards long, and was once fitted with doors and defences at

three points. Over its outer entrance is a Latin inscription, presumably from the days of the Romans. The northeastern slope is not so long, and the tunnel is no longer used as an entrance since the Turks broke a way through the wall in 1894.

Seen from the north, Kerak was once a most perfect specimen of the walled and battlemented cities that one sees portrayed on ancient plates. The northern wall, rising from the edge of the natural precipice, was cyclopean, and the city was banked behind it, in tier after tier of houses. At the eastern angle rose a mass of ancient fortress buildings, guarding the eastern gate and the narrow neck of land which joined the spur to the surrounding mountains. At the western extremity was the great castle of Beibars, while behind and above the whole expanse rose the blackened walls of the great castle of Kerak, completing a picture that has few situations to rival it in any land.

The views from Kerak itself are circumscribed on the north, east, and south by the rolling tops of the mountains of Moab, but westward the outlook is sublime. Fifty miles away as the crow flies, one can make out Jerusalem and the buildings on the Mount of Olives, while between stretch the hill country of Southern Judea, the deep cleft of the Arabah, and the waters of the Dead Sea, sleeping the sleep of death in their grave at the border of Edom. With stout hearts within the walls, with supplies of grain and food within her granaries, with the everlasting fountains of pure water flowing

331 KERAK FROM THE MISSION ROOF

in the valleys below, one does not wonder that the city and fortress has been the envy of those who stormed, and the pride of those who stood within her gates, while the centuries have rolled by.

The complete history of the city has yet to be dug from her crumbling walls and heaps of debris, and from the dusty manuscripts of the Crusaders. The references to it cover a period of nearly three thousand years, but there can be little doubt that the mountain-top was a dwelling-place before the dawn of history as we know it. While as yet the identification of Kerak with the Kir Hareseth of 2 Kings iii. is not complete, the whole weight of evidence is in its favor. So that we are not falling into error when we connect Kerak with the gruesome story of Mesha who "took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him a burnt offering upon the wall" (2 Kings iii., 27). During the period of the Judges, the Moabites, whose capital seems to have been Kerak, compelled the Israelites to pay them tribute. But Saul and David and later kings overcame the Moabites and reversed the situation, so that in the days of Ahab, Mesha, the Moabite King, had agreed to pay to the King of Israel "an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams with the wool" (2 Kings iii., 4). But, finding an opportunity to rebel against the corrupt and decaying power in Samaria, he did so, and driving the Israelites out of Diban and Madeba, he rebuilt the fortresses north of the Arnon. His victory,

however, was soon turned to sorrow and shame. Jehoram and Jehoshaphat and the King of Edom moved in league against him. They chose the "way of the wilderness of Edom, and made a circuit of seven days' journey, where there was no water for the host, nor for the beasts that followed them" (2 Kings iii., 9), which means that they came south of the Dead Sea. Elisha appeared, to save the host at a critical moment and to strike terror into the heart of the Moabites, who fled from city to city, filling up the wells as they retreated, blocking the roads by felling trees, until at last the bloody strife waged round the walls of this ancient city. Then Mesha, the boastful King, pressed sore by the angry Israelites, committed the impious act of burning his own son, the heir-apparent, in sacrifice to the sun-god on the walls of the city. This act caused such horror in the minds of the Israelites, and inspired such fresh courage in the hearts of Mesha's men, that they drove back the victorious armies of the allied kings. Then he set up the black monument to Chemosh, which we now know as the "Moabite Stone," to commemorate his deliverance and victory. This sombre story of rebellion, of pride, of lawlessness, of bloodshed, and of shame is Kerak's first claim to notice, and is also a type of all her subsequent history. It was a border city then, at times independent, at times held by the Israelites, at times by the Edomites, then by the Moabites, and always the scene of lawlessness and bloodshed.

335 KERAK—MAIN STREET, SHOWING END OF NEW SERAIA

Its chief interest for us to-day, however, is not so much its connection with the early centuries of Israelitish history, but its place in the history of the Crusaders, and the great struggle between Mohammedanism and Christianity in the Middle Ages.

Reference has been made (p. 186) to the attempt of the Crusaders to surround and isolate the Holy Land[1] by a chain of fortresses, reaching from the seacoast at Sidon, across by Tibnin and Belfort to Banias, then down the highlands east of the Jordan, via Rubud, El Ajlun, Jerash, Salt, Madeba, and Shobek, then from Kerak across to the seacoast again at Gaza. Kerak, with its outpost at Shobek, was the extreme outpost in the system—the farthest away from all supplies and assistance, the most exposed of all the fortresses to the storms of invasion which swept with whirlwind violence up from the desert. It commanded the caravan route from Egypt and Arabia to Damascus, and was the extreme edge of the Crusader wedge which they had hoped to drive into Arabia and thereby split forever the power of Mohammedanism. It therefore became the scene of some of the most momentous struggles in that mournful period. The herculean efforts made to hold it by the Crusaders, the frightful assaults and sacrifices made by the Moslems to win it, and the story of shame connected with its fall recall vividly the earliest recorded tragedy in its history.

And here we note another of those trans-Jordanic

[1] The Romans did practically the same thing.

paradoxes for the archæologist. In the chapter on the Decapolis, page 157, it was pointed out that the finest specimen of an ancient Greek city extant is found not in Greece but in the ruins of Jerash east of the Jordan. So when we come to study the less distant period of the epoch-making Crusades, we are surprised to learn that, taken altogether, "the great castle of Kerak is by far the grandest monument of crusading energy now existing." This was the verdict of Canon Tristram in 1873, and any one who will look into the magnificent volumes of DeSaulcy, and read the detailed descriptions of Bliss and other travellers since then, will have little difficulty in accepting the truth of this statement. The castle, built at the southern angle and the highest point of the city, is a mass of vaulted rooms and chambers, more than two hundred and fifty yards square, and still reaching up four and five stories. Somewhere among these ruins is a Crusader crypt chapel, ninety feet long. Toward the south (see picture Vol. II., p. 3, Kerak seen from south) its scarped slope and towering walls must have shown a height of fully two hundred feet, while toward the city it was protected by a moat or ditch, hewn in the solid rock, one hundred feet wide.

The first Crusade is dated 1096, and Baldwin and Godfrey were at the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. Thirty-two years later Fulke, or Fulco, of Anjou was King of Jerusalem, and during his reign this massive fortress was built, that is, about 1131

339 KERAK —CRUSADER CASTLE

A.D. It was strengthened under the superintendence of Godfrey of Boulogne, and in 1183 it defied and baffled the assaults of Saladin. Reynald of Chatillon, a wild and lawless chieftain, was made "Lord of Kerak," and entrusted with the command of this most important outpost. Saladin's unsuccessful assaults had issued in a truce, according to which the Crusaders were to be left undisturbed in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and the Moslem caravans allowed to pass freely between Egypt and Damascus. But Reynald, disregarding his oath, issued from the keep of Kerak, and sacked one of the richest of the Damascus caravans. Saladin appealed peaceably for redress from Reynald, but in vain. His exasperation increased until he could no longer forbear, and once again he turned his conquering forces against the Crusaders. Not many months later, the struggle reached its crisis in the fatal and final battle at the Horns of Hattin, above the beautiful Sea of Galilee, where on July 5, 1187, the doom of the Crusaders was sealed forever, in their awful defeat. Reynald himself, King John of Jerusalem, and the Grand Master of the Templars were among the captives. Reynald was there slain in cold blood, for his act of perfidy east of Kerak, and three months later Jerusalem opened its gates to the Saracens, and the troubled, romantic dream of the Crusaders' kingdom was at an end.

The castle of "Beibars el Melek" is the name given to the remains of a massive structure at the western angle of the city. This fortress was built

round three sides of a trapezium which is ninety yards at its longest diameter. The walls in the lower stories are twenty-seven feet thick, and old inhabitants of the place say that fifty years ago it was three times as high as it is now. At that time it must have presented a wall of one hundred and fifty feet of solid masonry, above the moat or ditch, and the top of it must have afforded a fine view toward Jerusalem. Unfortunately, it has been the quarry most accessible to the modern dwellers of Kerak. The most recent buildings erected from it are the new military hospital (picture, facing) and the large school. The second view (Kerak Crusader Castle, p. 339), looking from the high ground south, shows the dwindling form of this once mighty building.

Sir Charles Wilson[1] says of Kerak, that the "lower portion of these walls and towers may be Roman, or even earlier"—but the "Great Castle and the town walls, as a whole, are the work of the Crusaders, and an extremely fine example of mediæval fortification. With the exception of necessary repairs, few additions have been made to the works, since the place was held against the might of Saladin," over seven hundred years ago.

Since the days of the Crusades, the fortress has always remained an apple of discord between the rulers of Egypt and Syria and its history during these five or six centuries is yet to be dug out of the musty archives of Europe. Ibrahim Pasha,

[1] *Pal. Exp. Quarterly*, 1898.

343 KERAK—REFUSE HEAP

during his conquest of Syria, in 1844, was never able to take Kerak, whose proud boast, as late as 1890, was, that it still remained a virgin city. Since the days of Ibrahim Pasha its inhabitants, led by unscrupulous sheikhs, have been the terror of all travellers who attempted to visit the eastern shores of the Dead Sea and the Land of Moab. They have swooped down upon visitors, and carried them practically prisoners into the city, where the matter of bakhshish or ransom was arranged to their great disadvantage. Canon Tristram and his party were thus held in 1873, and some £600 demanded from them. At that time, according to missionary Klein, there were two hundred and seventy Christian, and five hundred and fourteen Mohammedan families living in Kerak, in all not more than four or five thousand souls. Yet these people continued to maintain their independence for another twenty years, until along in 1894 the Turkish government seized a favorable opportunity and captured the city. The Kerak people were in blood feud with all their neighbors except Shobek, and the Turks, by the use of money inside, and a strong military force outside, effected an entrance, but not without much bloodshed. Since then they have held it by a strong garrison. Their first act was to break down the walls at two points, above the eastern gate, and toward the south. This destroyed the strategic value of the narrow tunnel entrances. Since then they have built a new Seraia (government building), a post-office, telegraph station, a

large school, and a military hospital. At the time of our visit, the garrison consisted of two thousand infantry, quartered in the great Crusader castle, and two hundred and fifty horsemen, who live like the locusts. We were surprised to find that the government still continues to pay monthly stipends to certain of the head men. This "hush money" amounts, according to common rumor, to as much as one thousand silver dollars monthly, one man receiving as much as two hundred of it. As far as we could learn, this large gratuity was a charge upon the government allowance made toward the safe convoy of the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca. So through the destruction of their fortress by the partial demolition of its mighty walls, the opening of ready communication afforded by telegraph wires to Damascus and the central government at Constantinople, the corrupting stream of silver coins, the garrison of regular soldiers and hawk-like horseman, not to mention the accompanying band of civil officials, with all that their presence means, this ancient eagle's nest has been stirred and broken and its fiery brood is at last reduced to a state of poverty, laziness, and degradation, from which they will never recover. If the government finds that it must retain its garrison in order to secure the road to Mecca, the city will live on; otherwise it will fall still lower when the line of defence against the desert moves eastward to the vicinity of the new railway, and Kerak, the pride of the Crusaders, will lose its importance forever.

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There is something in every human breast which rebels against the resistless changes which come over such cities and locations, on whose existence and strength the destinies of civilization once seemed to hang. It is perhaps impossible now to realize how much of the welfare and safety of Christendom once seemed linked with this frontier fortress in Arabia. The importance which the builders attached to it can be seen from the masses of gateway, bastion, keep, and fortress which they reared at an enormous outlay of gold, and then defended with shining swords and coats of mail, until their last drop of blood was shed in the cause they so passionately loved. Nor did they struggle and die in vain for the great cause which Kerak represents. While the armed knights paced the ramparts of this lonely outpost, modern Europe was born, and before the last Crusader banner was swept from the Holy Land, the Anglo-Saxon star was in the ascendant, God's alchemy had formed the Reformation within the world's crucible of human woe, and the tide of Mohammedan conquest, which had lashed the gates of Vienna, was receding forever.

We spent the Sunday in Kerak, and saw something of the people and their daily life. The modern town is built of the debris of many former towns, so that among the more crowded quarters the streets have been filled and refilled, until they are on a level almost with the tops of the miserable houses, whose entrances assume the nature of a

descent into a cave. The photograph (Front Door) gives an example of these Kerak dwellings. The town is still divided into clans, which however act together in matters touching their common welfare. The various trades also have a community of interests, and the photograph on page 351 ("Blacksmiths' Council") shows the little open space where the blacksmiths congregate to discuss the interests of their handicraft. Time is of small value at such gatherings, and hence the meeting place is rarely without a little knot of members.

We also saw something of the heroic work of the Church Missionary Society. It reminds one of the Crusaders' efforts, in that it is by far the loneliest and hardest outpost in all the Syrian field. Many years ago a Mr. Leatheby, an independent worker, tried to enter and live in Kerak. In spite of the shameful treatment he received, he remained bravely at his post, and after years of humble effort won the confidence and respect of many. In 1894 the Church Missionary Society came and opened a medical work, which has done much to diminish prejudice. The native Christians are very poor in this world's goods, but rich in bigotry and indifference. Dr. E. Johnson was in charge at the time of our visit, and showed us many kindnesses. He was assisted by a native pastor, Rev. Hanna Dimeshky, who has seen nearly forty years' service in Palestine. Dr. Johnson, when we saw him, was on the eve of a journey to England, in order to bring back his wife and two children. He came

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back in October, six months later, and because the cholera was bad in Jaffa and Jerusalem, he made the long land journey down from Damascus. Only some ten days after his arrival his wife was taken suddenly ill, and was as suddenly claimed by death, leaving her husband and motherless children in this lonely spot.

While in Kerak we received two telegrams from our families in Beirut, saying all was well. This was the first and the last word that we had from them until we reached Jerusalem, after an interval of forty-two days. Letters were sent to us at various points, and also telegrams, but failed to catch us.

END OF VOLUME I.